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Ai Group, Swinburne and Siemens partner for high-level Industry 4.0 apprenticeship initiative

"Ai Group is embarking on a major collaborative project that could reinvent apprenticeships in Australia. The aim is to create an apprenticeship model that will support the higher skills needed for the emerging fourth industrial revolution or what has become known as Industry 4.0," Australian Industry Group Chief Executive, Innes Willox, said today.

"Ai Group's *Higher Level Applied Technology apprenticeship project* has had funding approved under the Stream Two of the *Apprenticeships Training – alternative delivery pilots* initiative by the Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills, Karen Andrews. This innovative project will be implemented in collaboration with Siemens Ltd and Swinburne University of Technology.

"This is a ground-breaking initiative. Not only will this provide higher level qualifications, it will also appeal to a broader cross-section of young people who will gain these qualifications while working in a company that is a technology leader," Mr Willox said.

Siemens Ltd, the leader of the Prime Minister's Industry 4.0 Taskforce, together with related companies, will achieve the benefits of apprenticeship skills through the delivery of a new Diploma and Associate Degree in Applied Technologies developed in collaboration with Swinburne University of Technology. The qualification will meet the particular needs of industry with a focus on the adoption of high-level technology skills and the tools required for the future workforce. The qualification brings together key industry initiatives and policies, such as the National Science and Innovation Agenda and the Growth Centres initiatives, into a practical experiential learning environment to address real industry needs.

The pilot combines the best of university and vocational learning models to improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills of technically minded participants. It also incorporates skills for the new millennia in business and design. Participants will be highly capable post-Year 12 school leavers and will be employed under arrangements built upon the apprenticeship model for the duration of the program.

"The award of an Associate Degree articulating to a Bachelor's Degree will appeal to a broader range of potential applicants than the standard apprenticeship model. Employers are able to train future technicians with a higher skills level to meet their increasing needs in the knowledge economy," Mr Willox said.

The pilot will initially involve 20 participants through participation in a Diploma and Associate Degree in Applied Technologies with guaranteed pathways for graduates to a relevant Bachelor Degree by 2020.

Commenting on the initiative, Jeff Connolly, CEO of Siemens said, "The industrial

environment has entered a phase of digital revolution. Australia needs to continuously modify education content and delivery models in order to equip today's youth with the skills needed to be a part of the digitalised future.

"The Prime Minister's Industry 4.0 Taskforce Apprenticeship program is a practical, action-oriented approach which should further increase our ability to be a part of the future of advanced manufacturing and secure jobs in major global supply chains," Mr Connolly said.

Professor Linda Kristjanson, Vice Chancellor of Swinburne University, stated it is committed to delivering social and economic impact in partnership with industry. "As Australia's labour market is fundamentally reshaped by technological change, our education and training system must continue to evolve to meet industry needs. The program will deliver graduates with the skills required to meet the impact of disruptive technologies in all industries and provide them with a competitive edge."