MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW CYBER TASK FORCE TO DRIVE STANDARDS

An Australian first collaboration between the NSW Government, AustCyber and Standards Australia has seen the creation of a task force charged with accelerating the adoption of industry standards for cyber security across Australia.

Made up of a cross-sector group of industry experts, including in defence, energy, health and financial services, at its first meeting today the task force agreed the focus should be:

- Improving the practice of cyber security across Australian businesses
- Harmonising baseline standards and providing clarity for sector-specific additional standards and guidance
- Enhancing competitiveness standards by sector for both supplier and consumers
- Providing greater interoperability
- Supporting Australian cyber security companies to seize opportunities and go global.

Minister for Customer Service Victor Dominello said the task force was another critical step in bolstering government's cyber security defences and creating a strong cyber security ecosystem.

"We know that the current plethora of different security standards make it difficult for government and industry to know what they're buying when it comes to cyber security," Mr Dominello said.

"By bringing together industry to identify relevant standards and provide other practical guidance, we aim to make government more secure, whilst providing direction for industry to build their cyber resilience.

"This will realise our ambition for NSW to become the leading cyber security hub in the Southern Hemisphere."

AustCyber CEO Michelle Price said trust in the digital infrastructure now driving Australia's economy is at the core of Australia's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and cyber security functions as an insurance policy for a resilient economy.

"The economy's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has proven Australia can take leaps towards embedding digital technologies, but the quality of this digitisation and digitalisation along with its trustworthiness is now under immense pressure – and is obviously being targeted by malicious cyber actors," she said.

"There is a risk underlying the speed of digital transformation in Australia, and the new standards will be critical in helping deliver a consistent, industry-focused framework for NSW. The newly established task force will help NSW businesses understand what they need to do to tackle the complex challenge of protecting against cyber attacks.

"This work will also provide a pilot for the rest of the country to enable rapid adoption of consistent, internationally harmonised cyber security standards and guidance. Cyber security is one of Australia's most promising growth sectors and importantly protects our digital infrastructure and data."

CEO of Standards Australia Adrian O'Connell said the cyber task force is an exciting opportunity to strengthen cyber security across the board.

"Standards Australia looks forward to working alongside the NSW Government, AustCyber and the members of the task force in providing information around technical guidance and promoting industry backed security practices through the use of standards," Mr O'Connell said.

The task force creation follows the NSW Government's record $240 million investment in the cyber industry last week.