



Call for close collaboration between industry players, governments and academic institutions to create regional centres of Services excellence

IBM discusses its vision for building a globally competitive Australian IT services industry

Canberra, 18 March 2009: At the inaugural Australian Services Summit, hosted by the Australian Services Roundtable at Parliament House today, IBM's Richard Vahtrick called upon the NSW State Government for assistance in establishing a regional IT Services Centre in NSW, similar to its already successful Ballarat facility in Victoria.

"We have many clients – including government agencies – for which global resourcing of IT services is not an option. For these clients – and others – competitively priced, highly skilled, local facilities must be sustained and developed," said Vahtrick, Vice-President, Global Technology Services Delivery, IBM Australia and New Zealand, adding that "Australia needs to build world-class capabilities at the cutting edge of innovation."

Vahtrick went on to detail the history of the company's Ballarat, Victoria Client Service Centre, which represents a successful partnership between IBM, the University of Ballarat (the Centre is located on campus), the State Government of Victoria, and the City of Ballarat.

In Ballarat, it is undergraduates who make up a significant portion of the workforce at the IBM centre, receiving credits to their degree while gathering industry exposure and 'hands-on' experience. Not only does IBM benefit from a young, enthusiastic and motivated workforce, but it also is able to drive a lower cost business using a blend of qualifying and qualified skills," said Vahtrick.

"What we need now, is to expand upon this model. To ensure that regional delivery centres continue to thrive in Australia; that jobs continue to be created to lift an ailing economy; to ensure an ongoing pipeline of skilled IT talent in this country," he said.

Vahtrick went on to make a direct call on the NSW State Government to provide a commitment of business and assistance for a move to regionalization, stressing that if this was provided, IBM would similarly commit to cost savings and improved service levels.

"If we want to build a globally competitive Australian IT services industry we need long-term vision, government commitment, energy and creativity," said Richard Vahtrick.

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