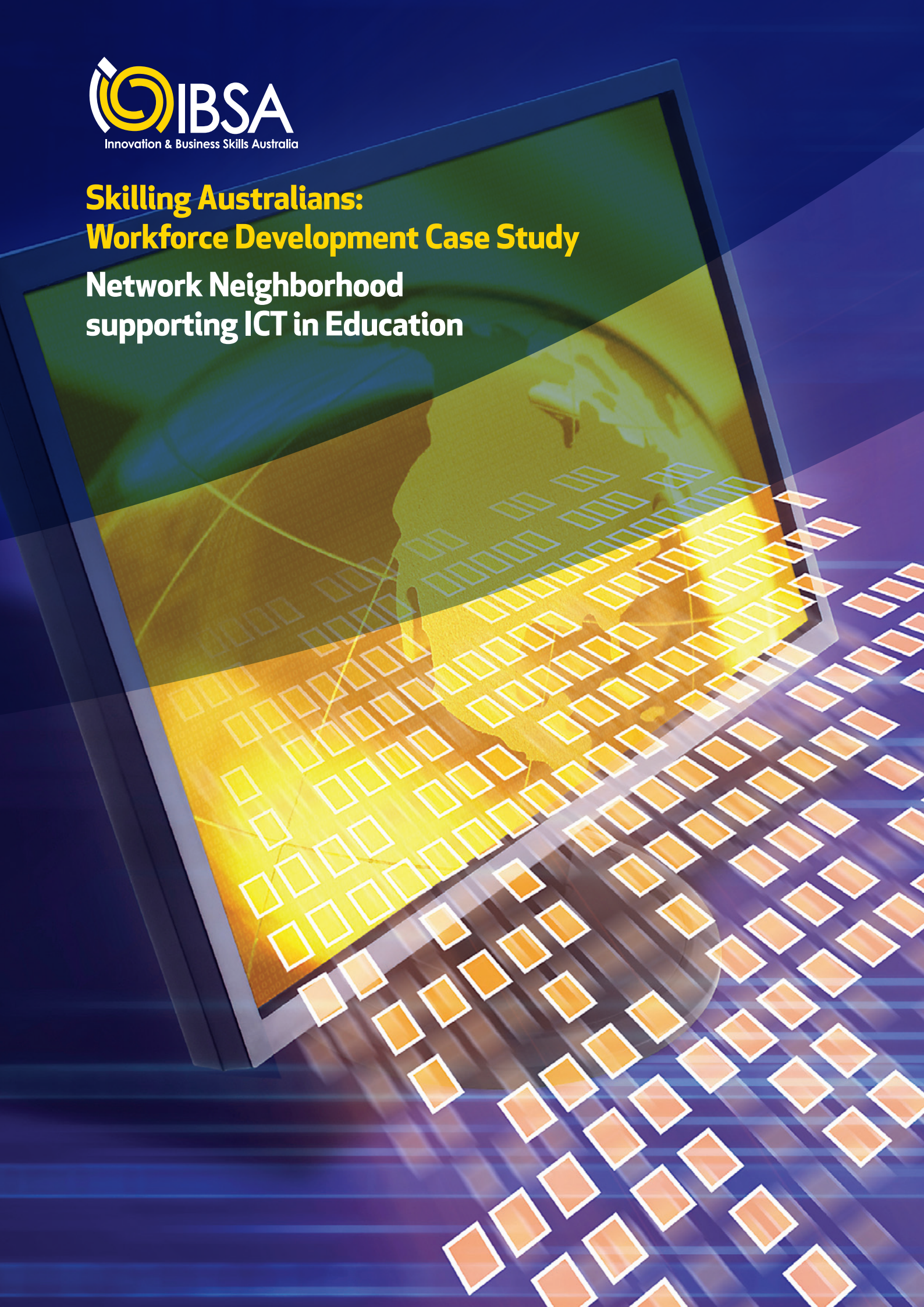




**Skilling Australians:  
Workforce Development Case Study**  
**Network Neighborhood  
supporting ICT in Education**



Through the Australian Government's National Workforce Development Fund, IBSA works with organisations like Network Neighborhood and CITT to motivate, develop and upskill staff to increase their performance and ultimately contribute to the profitability of the organisation and the productivity of the Australian workforce.

Founded in 1999, Network Neighborhood Pty Ltd was established to provide high quality service and products to the education sector. Working with industry partners, the company has grown significantly and now has in excess of 170 staff with services expanded to include technical, project and infrastructure, warranty and lifecycle services and IT products.

Network Neighborhood's purpose is to create an environment which builds and develops people, helping them reach their full potential both personally and professionally. To this purpose, Network Neighborhood encourages an environment of innovation, where integrity, accountability, teamwork and customer value are fostered. The company has a dynamic, high functioning team that services over 300 schools across Victoria. CEO Hugh Marquis sees Network Neighborhood's focus on staff training and development as one of the keys to its success.

#### **Workforce Development, Vocational Education and Training and the National Workforce Development Fund**

Australia is facing the dual challenge of not only skilling a workforce to undertake the massive broadband infrastructure build, but also developing the information and communication technology (ICT) skills necessary to promote adoption.

IBSA's ICT Environment scan noted that the gap between demand for ICT skills and the supply of those skills threatens

Australia's export and productivity gains, innovation capacity and employment growth across the sector. Enterprises who are keen to utilise funded upskilling through the National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) can help to bridge the gap.

The NWDF is a new approach to skills training that focuses on meeting business training needs. It is an innovative, industry-driven model that enables businesses to work through an Industry Skills Council and co-invest with the Government to train, reskill and upskill workers in areas of skills need as ICT is always evolving.

With this in mind Network Neighborhood worked with IBSA and ICT industry body Communications and Information Technology Training Company (CITT) to access customised NWDF training to increase their skills and knowledge in ICT areas relevant to their education clients and meet the company's workforce training needs. CITT is a not-for-profit company established to promote and facilitate training and employment opportunities within the information and communications technology industries. ICT industries have been identified as an area of emerging skill needs and CITT has been successful in gaining NWDF funding on behalf of a number of enterprises.

Working with IBSA, CITT has coordinated the enterprise's application process and assists with monitoring ongoing reporting requirements. Investing in skills and training through



industry-driven initiatives like the NWDF is vital in helping businesses like Network Neighborhood to meet the challenges of a transitioning economy.

### **Network Neighborhood NWDF skilling project**

With assistance for training costs through the NWDF, seven Network Neighborhood technicians completed the Advanced Diploma of Information Technology (Project Management). Network Neighborhood is a strong supporter of competency based training for vocational education and the NWDF offered them a great opportunity to engage in training that improved staff ICT project management skills. Education Services Coordinator Gareth Bettridge feels that vocational training provides his current staff with excellent practical skills that enable them to realise the high standards expected of them. Gareth believes in providing staff with ample opportunity to undergo training for compliance and skill advancement purposes. He notes that soft skills are very important when working in schools and that it is very important for technicians (Customer Engineers, Systems Engineers and Solution Architects) to be good communicators as well as good technicians.

Gareth Bettridge spoke very highly of funded upskilling through the NWDF as it enabled Network Neighborhood staff to standardise documents and functions to ensure that all work completed complies with industry standards and best practice. Gareth was also greatly impressed with the training

conducted by Chisholm Institute of Technology. The training delivery methods included mentoring, guided learning and excellent course material. PMBOK and PRINCE2 were the methodologies selected for the course.

### **Meeting skill need challenges**

Network Neighborhood is committed to developing their team to ensure that they are the best at what they do. The organisation found the NWDF program an effective way to train staff in accordance with company core values to meet skill need challenges. The company is considering submitting another NWDF application as they have been working with schools to produce a strategic document in order to set out the plans, goals and actions required to be taken to ensure that the schools' learning objectives are not only uninhibited but are enhanced by ICT in the school.

Network Neighborhood addresses ICT skill need challenges with a business model that focuses on customer service and project management. This enables them to provide high level service by listening to customers and building project work around customer needs. Gareth Bettridge believes that staff skill needs should relate to company values and skills training reinforces the importance of customer focus, team work and project management.



Providing the Australian ICT industry with strategic advice about the Information Technology and Telecommunications sectors.

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Network Neighborhood believes that by helping its clients and staff to be successful then as a company it is successful.

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**More information about Australian Government programs**

[www.skillsconnect.gov.au](http://www.skillsconnect.gov.au)

**Innovation & Business Skills Australia Ltd**

Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) is one of 11 Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) funded by the Australian Government to:

- provide integrated industry intelligence and advice to governments on workforce development and skills needs
- maintain and improve training materials and supporting products and services and
- provide advice on skills, training and workforce development to enterprises.

IBSA is committed to building the capability of businesses and to ensuring individuals have contemporary skills through the vocational education and training system in ICT, telecommunications, education and training, small business administration, printing, finance and the cultural and creative industries. IBSA is an expert intermediary on qualifications, skills needs and workforce planning and works as a central coordination point for the Australian Government's workforce development programs.

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**Australian Government**  
**Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change,  
Science, Research and Tertiary Education**

This publication has been produced with the assistance of funding provided by the Commonwealth Government through the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education.