

Microsoft Australia and Charles Sturt University expands IT Masters.

Builds on outstanding success of IT Masters with remote learning capabilities and additional Masters programs.

SYDNEY - 4th April 2003 - Microsoft Australia, Charles Sturt University and IT Masters today announced the expansion of the IT Masters education program, following its overwhelming success which saw more than a fourfold increase on expected student applications.

The expansion of the program, which is a joint initiative from Microsoft Australia, Charles Sturt University and IT Masters, will allow for overseas student enrolment, and the introduction of a .NET Microsoft Certified Solutions Developer (MCSD) Masters, called the Masters of Systems Development.

The inclusion of overseas students is expected to result in export earnings approaching AUD\$20 million in the next two years. Additionally a number of other Masters programs are under consideration including Network Security and IT Sales.

Martin Hale, CEO of IT Masters explains, "The reason for the popularity of the IT Masters program is that it is the only Masters worldwide where the achievement of industry certifications such as the Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer is an integral and mandatory part of successful completion."

For overseas-based students the course program will be delivered through distance education with examinations at university examination centres in the student's home country. IT Masters' professionally certified mentors will use Microsoft's CTEC - KnowledgeNet Learning Management System (LMS) to monitor students' progress and provide support as necessary. The initial target country for overseas students is the USA.

The courses have been designed to cater for busy IT professionals who can continue in full time employment while studying. Greg Lowe, a current Masters student who holds a place on the board of the Australian Institute of Training & Development (AITD) and is actively involved in all facets of the IT Networking industry, explains, "It's exciting to see the course being expanded to include overseas students as it creates a real feeling of Australia being part of the international IT community. I can't wait to share my IT experiences and learn from other professionals around the globe."

According to Derek Kerr, Technical Community Manager for Microsoft Australia, the success of the program is testimony to the focus of Microsoft Australia, Charles Sturt University and IT Masters on meeting the real educational and development needs of IT professionals.

"The ideal development path for IT professionals to take is a combination of practical industry certifications and the holistic, overall development that university qualifications provide," said Derek Kerr.

Charles Sturt University is currently accepting applications for the July 2003 intake. Details about the Masters and how to apply can be found at: www.itmasters.com.au.

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and Internet technologies for personal and business computing. The company offers a wide range of products and services designed to empower people through great software — any time, any place and on any device.

About Charles Sturt University

Charles Sturt University is the eighth largest university and the largest distance education provider in Australia, providing significant educational, social, cultural and economic benefits to its regions. The university has earned a reputation for working hand-in-hand with business, the professions and government to provide courses and advice to meet the demands of a changing workforce and changing times. CSU's partnerships and alliances are marked by a diversity and drive that

make it distinctive from other universities in Australia.

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