JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

International 'Country to Country' cyber security competition trains next generation of job-ready university graduates

Edith Cowan University's Security Research Institute and technology company FifthDomain led Australia's involvement in the first Country to Country (C2C) Capture the Flag (CTF) cyber security competition held over the weekend.

The competition brought together 150 university students in 31 teams from around the world – including Australia, France, Israel, Japan, the UK and USA – to compete over a 24-hour period.

Unlike similar events, the C2C-CTF did not set countries or universities against each other. Instead, teams were composed of students from different universities, so the focus was not which institution or nation was best, but which team displayed the best communication, skills and team work.

Students from Australia's Edith Cowan University were among the top performers in the competition – including the team leader Tarun Patel of winning team BONTS (Team 24).

Edith Cowan University (ECU) is the leading Australian institution for the competition. ECU's Executive Dean of the School of Science, Professor Andrew Woodward, said the event would provide students the chance to test their skills in countering emerging attacks and other essential skills for future cyber security careers.

"With the soaring costs of cyber crime threatening Australian and global businesses, the cyber security industry is set to replace the mining sector as the next jobs boom in Australia," Professor Woodward said.

"It is expected the global cyber security workforce shortage will reach between three and six million over the next few years."

FifthDomain, the competition's technology platform provider, is a leading Australian specialist in cyber operations workforce development and training. Their platform delivers a fun, effective and powerful way to learn and measure cyber operational skills while gaining practical, hands-on experience.

Matt Wilcox, Founder and CEO of FifthDomain, commented: "We are proud to be delivering the first C2C-CTF to university students around the world. Our company was chosen because of our proven track record delivering education, training and simulation to cyber operators of all levels of experience – from school students to elite defence personnel. And within the context of COVID-19, our ability to deliver remotely accessible training and collaboration has never been more important."

FifthDomain also provided the challenge content based on real-world cyber security problems. Teams used a range of tools, tactics and techniques from Reverse Engineering, Cryptography, Digital Forensics and Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) to complete challenges and win points.

The aim of the C2C-CTF is to address the global cyber skills gap and foster international cooperation while aligning student education with the hands-on cyber skills required to make them job ready.

The 2020 C2C-CTF is the first in a five-year series organised by the International Cyber Security – Center of Excellence (INCS-CoE). A different nation will host the C2C-CTF each year, with Australia slated to host the competition in 2024.

Participation in this program closely aligns with Australia's Cyber Security Strategy 2020, which commits A$1.67b investment over ten years and outlines a range of initiatives including growing a skilled workforce of job ready cyber security workers.

It also supports Australia's international cyber affairs and trade agenda by strengthening international partnerships that promote stability and cooperation; and by promoting trade opportunities for Australian digital goods and services.

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About Edith Cowan University

ECU is one of the world's top young universities and has a strong reputation for teaching quality that's among Australia's best, evidenced by 14 straight years of 5-star ratings in the *Good Universities Guide*. Located in Western Australia, ECU's industry-relevant courses are offered across three campuses – Joondalup, Mount Lawley and the South West Campus near Bunbury. ECU is planning to open an exciting new creative industries, business and technology campus in the heart of Perth's CBD in 2025.

About FifthDomain

fifthdomain.com.au
FifthDomain is a leading Australian specialist in cyber operations workforce development and management. Its individual and collective training and simulation platform is transforming the cyber operations landscape. FifthDomain partners with defence, government, industry and academia to harness expertise in cyber security education and deliver secure, on-demand solutions to customers nationally and internationally. A key part of Australia's sovereign capability in solving the global cyber security crisis, FifthDomain has been instrumental in evolving the vocational education sector's cyber security curriculum and is working with the Australian Defence Force to further develop critical cyber skill sets and address the growing skills gap.

For media enquiries contact:

Victoria Till, Marketing & Communications Manager, FifthDomain
Phone: 0401 432 912   Email: victoria.till@fifthdomain.com.au

Spokespeople available for interview:

ECU: Professor Andrew Woodward , Executive Dean of the School of Science
              Kenneth Tan, C2C-CTF participant

FifthDomain: Matt Wilcox, CEO and Founder
               Adam Henry, Director Education & Research Programs