

Submission to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into AI and Data

About me:

I am early childhood teacher living and working in Adelaide, SA.

AI is becoming embedded into my work and used by many of my colleagues, which horrifies me due to the myriad of ethical and environmental concerns about LLMs. I am also a creative at a hobbyist level, and it is demoralising to see AI take over the creative spaces that I exist within, and even see AI scraping my content that I make out of love, in order to profit off of my unpaid labour.

I am concerned about AI because:

I have significant concerns about the increasing environmental impact of AI/LLMs. As an arid country, we should not be using the amount of water necessary to cool data centres (nor should we be outsourcing it to countries in the global South). We should also be aiming for electricity sovereignty and renewable energy, to promote energy stability and resilience, rather than allowing AI companies to use our valuable energy resources on running data centres.

“According to new projections published by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in December, by 2028 more than half of the electricity going to data centers will be used for AI. At that point, AI alone could consume as much electricity annually as 22% of all US households.”

James O'Donnell and Casey Crownhart, May 20th 2025, "We did the math on AI's energy footprint. Here's the story you haven't heard." Technology Review.
<https://www.technologyreview.com/2025/05/20/1116327/ai-energy-usage-climate-footprint-big-tech/>

“Initial research shows that AI has a significant water footprint. It uses water both for cooling the servers that power its computations and for producing the energy it consumes. As AI becomes more integrated into our societies, its water footprint will inevitably grow.

“The growth of ChatGPT and similar AI models has been hailed as “the new Google.” But while a single Google search requires half a millilitre of water in energy, ChatGPT consumes 500 millilitres of water for every five to 50 prompts.

“Data centres provide the physical infrastructure for training and running AI, and their energy consumption could double by 2026. Technology firms using water to run and cool these data centres potentially require water withdrawals of 4.2 to 6.6 billion cubic metres by 2027.”

Gupta, Bosch, van Vliet, March 22nd 2024, "AI's excessive water consumption threatens to drown out it's environmental contributions", The Conversation.
<https://theconversation.com/ais-excessive-water-consumption-threatens-to-drown-out-its-environmental-contributions-225854>

AI companies expect to earn money that should be going to Australian creatives. AI companies are taking over everything, everything from social media to our entertainment cultural industries. Creative work is already perceived as worth less than other work - AI only contributes to this perception and devalues the incredible work of our Australian creatives.

Creators put their hearts and souls into their work. It's heartbreaking to see an AI version of creative work that has had the soul sucked out of it. Even for consumers, no one deserves AI slop instead of genuine Australian art.

Rather than a data-mining exemption for AI:

AI companies should be required to gain consent from, and pay the creators of any work that they want to use to train their LLM systems.

AI companies should be required to publish what content they have ingested into their systems, so that we can audit and confirm that our work is not plagiarised.

AI companies must remove from their systems any existing content for which they do not have a licence as a bare minimum standard for respecting artists and creatives.

Creators should be able to refuse to allow AI companies access to their work, even when it is published on the Internet for public consumption. The fact that creative works on every platform are being scraped to make AI content is genuinely disgusting.

AI companies should be required to clearly label AI-generated content, so that it is not confused with genuinely human-created works. It feels like a minefield going online and trying to count how many fingers a portrait has, or observing videos to see if they're too shiny to be real life. It's exhausting and Australian consumers deserve better.

The productivity commission should recognise that it is human creators who create productivity, not AI systems that plagiarise it.

Conclusion:

The Australian government needs to take decisive action on regulating AI, to support our country, our environment and our people.

Thank you for your time in reading this submission.