

**Submission  
No 14**

## **INQUIRY INTO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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I appreciate the opportunity to present my views regarding the potential influence of AI on the state of New South Wales, particularly focusing on the risks and challenges it entails.

As a young member of the Ashfield community, I am deeply concerned about the current and future implications of AI on my community. Regrettably, the prevailing discourse in Australia tends to underestimate the profound impact and negative consequences AI could have. It is crucial for our government to acknowledge these risks and take proactive measures to mitigate them effectively.

I have been alarmed by numerous AI experts expressing their concerns, as evidenced by the Statement on AI Risk and the call for a Pause on Giant AI experiments. A 2022 survey conducted by researchers at the University of Oxford revealed that 48% of experts believed there was at least a 10% chance of AI causing catastrophic outcomes, such as human extinction.

Addressing urgent action outlined in **terms of reference 1.(g)**, it is imperative to safeguard NSW's democratic institutions from the impending impact of AI.

Recent incidents, such as the misuse of AI-generated images during the referendum (source: The Guardian, August 7, 2023), clearly demonstrate AI's potential to manipulate democratic processes. Regardless of one's stance on the referendum, such occurrences are deeply unsettling.

Considering the rapid advancements in AI technology, there is a growing concern that AI could be further exploited in elections, potentially deceiving a non-insignificant portion of the population and influencing election outcomes. To preserve the integrity of our democracy, immediate action is required. Similar to how we regulate other potentially harmful technologies, AI developers and deployers must be held accountable.

Therefore, I propose the following actions for NSW:

1. **Prohibit AI-generated content in elections:** Or mandate transparent watermarking for AI-generated content related to electoral campaigns.
2. **Enforce general AI content watermarking:** Ensure transparency for all AI-generated content, especially images and videos.
3. **Implement safety standards for AI:** Allow AI deployment in NSW only if it meets stringent safety criteria, including watermarking.
4. **Impose strict penalties:** Punish developers and deployers who violate safety standards regarding AI use in NSW.

This approach not only preserves election integrity but also establishes a precedent for regulating AI in various contexts, similar to existing regulations in areas like transportation and construction.

**Terms of reference 1.(k)** asked after measures other jurisdictions, both international and domestic, are adopting in regard to the adaption to and regulation of AI.

One of the global developments that is most promising is the creation of "national laboratories" to enable technical tests on AI models, provide technical reports and provide ongoing monitoring and assurance. Singapore has established the AI Verify Foundation, the EU has created a Centre for Algorithmic Transparency, and the UK has a Foundation Model Taskforce.

Currently, Australia lacks a comparable facility within its borders or the broader region. This absence poses a significant challenge, as the deployment of trusted and secure AI in Australia may become increasingly difficult, or in the worst-case scenario, impossible, as AI capabilities and capacities expand.

NSW is well positioned to collaborate with other jurisdictions to create or support a national laboratory for AI safety, modelled on international best practices.

This approach is exciting because there is international best practice to follow, and NSW could use the laboratory to ensure the AI products it uses are safe and can be subject to effective ongoing monitoring and assurance.

Perhaps even more importantly, we are already seeing various kinds of dangerous and risky AIs. If we had a trusted national laboratory, it could assess AI products before they go to market. In the same way we don't let cars on our roads without them going through safety tests, a lab like this would allow us to block AIs until they've passed appropriate safety tests.

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute, and I trust the NSW Government will earnestly consider the genuine risks associated with AI for our (and also other) community's present and future well-being.

Warm regards,  
Mitchell Laughlin

These words are my own and do not reflect that of any current or past employer.