

## NEW TECH BRINGS HOPE AND CONCERN

# You can fear it or ignore it, but you can't escape AI

REGULATIONS LOOM AS OPINIONS ON AI ARE DIVIDED, **MELANIE BURGESS, PETER JUDD AND SAYEE SHREE RAVI SANKAR** REPORT

**A**ustralians are divided over artificial intelligence – but whether you fear it or revere it, the advent of AI is here and it can't be ignored.

Exclusive insights from Lonergan Research revealed 44 per cent of Aussies surveyed in May believed new advances in AI would have a net positive impact on society. The same portion, however, expected net negative impact.

Men and Generation Z (aged 18 to 24) respondents were most likely to be excited by the possibilities, while women and Baby Boomers (aged 60 plus) were less convinced.

Almost seven out of 10 respondents across the board said Australian companies should agree to pause AI development until governments could catch up and implement AI regulation.

This echoed global calls in an open letter published in March that has since amassed more than 30,000 signatures.

A recent statement published by the US-based Centre for AI Safety – “Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war” – was also supported by figures including Sam Altman, chief executive of OpenAI, creator of ChatGPT, and Geoffrey Hinton, a “godfather of AI” who sensationally quit his job at Google so he could talk freely about the dangers of the technology.

Australia does not yet have defined laws that regulate AI but they are coming, according to technology law expert David Fischl.

“Governments around the

### WHAT IS AI?

Artificial Intelligence is a branch of computer science that helps create “intelligent” machines. AI systems make decisions in a similar way to humans, learning from experience. AI systems do this by using complex algorithms to identify patterns in the data they are given. Using these patterns, AI can perform functions such as text, image or video generation. AI is at the heart of technologies from voice assistants such as Siri and Alexa, to recommendation systems on streaming platforms such as Netflix – and of course ChatGPT.

world are in a race to change their laws to achieve the delicate balance of protecting their citizens and local industries from adverse impacts of AI and encouraging their economies to adapt to and leverage the competitive benefits of AI,” the Hicksons Lawyers partner said.

For now, existing defamation, privacy, anti-discrimination or consumer laws should protect everyday Australians if they were negatively affected by an AI system producing incorrect or false claims or information about a person, discriminatory information, or misleading or unfair information or advice.

But for every warning, there was also someone highlighting productivity benefits. Accenture applied intelligence lead for Australia and New Zealand Kelly Brough said AI would allow companies to reinvent the way we work. Ms Brough urged closer

attention to any legal, ethical and reputational risks associated with AI but said ultimately “the positive impact on human creativity and productivity will be massive”.

“Every role in every enterprise has the potential to be reinvented,” she said.

The Lonergan research found 56 per cent believed AI would increase workplace productivity, with this higher among Millennials (66 per cent) and Gen Z (65 per cent).

Ben Hamer, from Swinburne University's Centre for the New Workforce, encouraged people to embrace generative AI and use it to their advantage.

“One billion people globally are using (ChatGPT), which is one-eighth of the world's population,” Dr Hamer said.

“This is the biggest uptake of any technology that we've seen in history, so it's not going anywhere.”

Although he acknowledged a need for AI regulation and consequences for people who misused it, Dr Hamer's advice for the average Australian was to just “give it a go”.

“Actually try the platforms, the tools in a way that's meaningful to you and your life,” he said.

Dr Hamer said ChatGPT was first seen as a gimmick but has since been applied in powerful ways, including teachers developing lesson plans for neurodiverse students.

“There will be a digital divide that grows based on those that know, are familiar with and are comfortable using the technology versus those that don't,” he said.

The federal government is currently accepting feedback on how it can support responsible AI via [consult.industry.gov.au/supporting-responsible-ai](http://consult.industry.gov.au/supporting-responsible-ai)



### BUSINESS SUPPORT

Almost a third of small business owners have used generative AI, such as ChatGPT, and another two in five intend to give it a go. Research from web hosting company GoDaddy revealed the tasks most commonly delegated to AI include drafting social media copy, conducting market research, devising social media strategies and researching competitors. Melbourne's James Emery, 27, estimated AI was saving

his small business, The Neighbour's Cellar, about 20 hours of work per week and about \$1500 a month. He has used ChatGPT to help brainstorm social media ideas, create financial summaries, write blog posts and plan a business trip. “In terms of allowing us to focus on areas of the business that will move us forward, it's saved us lots of time and obviously time is money in small business.”

### HELP WRITE A BOOK

Productivity coach and author Donna McGeorge produced her latest book in less than half the usual time by using ChatGPT. Ironically titled The ChatGPT Revolution: How to simplify your work and life admin with AI, the book was taken from ideation to print in about three months, down

from her typical eight or nine months. “Some people imagine that you just give ChatGPT a prompt then file your fingernails while it writes 35,000 words for you,” Ms McGeorge said. “It's more like you have



someone sitting next to you and you can say ‘hey, what do you think about this?’.” Ms McGeorge used ChatGPT to help her come up with the initial structure of the book, as well as ideas for case studies to include. “It was like having an eager intern with a hangover – it was very eager to help but I had to double check its work a lot,” she said.

### TRANSCRIBE YOUTUBE

Find insights in videos without having to watch from start to finish, with the help of ChatGPT. Here is a step-by-step guide:

1. Click the three dots under a YouTube video and select ‘Show transcript’.
2. Click the three dots next to the transcript and select ‘Toggle timestamps’.
3. Highlight transcript, then copy and paste it into ChatGPT.
4. Add a prompt asking ChatGPT to clean up the copy, such as “improve this transcript by adding punctuation, capital letters and paragraphs.”
5. The transcript can now be easily searched for keywords or ChatGPT create dot points.