



**Australian Screen Industry Guilds Joint Submission
to Productivity Commission 'Harnessing
data and digital technology' Interim Report**

15 September 2025

We acknowledge we live and work on Aboriginal land. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We thank them for their custodianship of land and waterways, stories, and song, and pay our respects to the oldest storytelling civilisations in the world.

Executive summary

Before we can assess the impact – positive or negative – artificial intelligence (AI) will have on Australian productivity, the fundamental issue that it has been built on the back of stolen intellectual property must be resolved. There can be no economic, cultural or scientific benefit to the nation until a process of transparency, consent and ongoing compensation is afforded to the creative workers who have made AI possible.

In our submission to the Productivity Commission's initial call for submissions to inform the 'Harnessing data and digital technology' interim report (**attached**), we argued that Australia's strong copyright framework is a sound basis for the continued growth of local Australian content and the future growth of Australian intellectual property. Our creative industries are billion-dollar industries, and Australian audiences want more of what we make. It is contrary to our economic and cultural interests to allow theft of our work by foreign companies, or exploitation of creative workers here. Government must ensure that our existing laws are applied to this blatant theft of work, now and into the future. We note the Productivity Commission failed to consult with creative organisations, or did so in an extremely limited way, in the preparation of its interim report, and this in part informs a thorough misunderstanding or dismissal of the creative sector in it.

We reject in the strongest possible terms any proposition that workers whose creative work has been stolen go uncompensated. We reject any proposal to retroactively legalise this theft. It is disappointing that the Productivity Commission seems to have accepted as foregone that it will endorse a text and data exception in its final report, despite the fact that consultations have not yet ended.

The Productivity Commission neglects to address concerns about whether or not this technology actually works reliably,¹ and whether it will have the economic impact that its proponents and investors – those with the greatest incentives to hype it – claim it will.² The tenor of the Interim Report is generally predicated on there being benefits for everyone if only some particularly permissive AI policies are adopted, usually ones that entrench the interests of foreign corporations. These propositions are dismissive of the real and tangible concerns regarding the damage AI has done and will do to the rights of creative workers, copyright owners and Australia's cultural and data sovereignty. Assertions about the benefits of AI are rarely interrogated or put to any evidence. As the Productivity Commission is aware, the work of Acemoglu *et al* demonstrates a far more nuanced picture of technological advancement and to whom the benefits of technology flow. It is telling that so much of the

¹ Elizabeth Gibney, "[Is AI Running Out of Data?](#)" Nature, 18 June 2024; David Tuffley, "[How Elon Musk's Chatbot Grok Could Be Helping Bring About an Era of Techno-Fascism.](#)" The Conversation <, 15 August 2024 <<https://theconversation.com/how-elon-musks-chatbot-grok-could-be-helping-bring-about-an-era-of-techno-fascism-261449>>; Matthew Sparkes, "[AI Hallucinations Are Getting Worse – and They're Here to Stay.](#)" New Scientist, 14 August 2024 <<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2479545-ai-hallucinations-are-getting-worse-and-theyre-here-to-stay/>>

² Simon Foy, "[Mark Zuckerberg Freezes AI Hiring amid Bubble Fears.](#)" The Telegraph, 21 August 2025 <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2025/08/21/zuckerberg-freezes-ai-hiring-amid-bubble-fears/>>.