

5 June 2023

Hunter takes aim at AI

The region's peak body, **Business Hunter**, has welcomed the Australian Government's responsible AI consultation papers as an opportunity to address growing anxiety and risk in the business sector.

Business Hunter CEO, Bob Hawes said while AI was already within our ranks, businesses felt unprepared and were concerned they could be exposed to risk.

"Open-source AI platforms such as Chat GPT have brought AI into the mainstream this year, and the reaction from the business community has been mixed. Some have embraced it as a time-saving device for drafting first rounds of copy, others have imposed blanket organisational bans due to data security fears," said Mr Hawes.

Mr Hawes said the discussion papers would begin a dialogue aimed at ensuring appropriate safeguards were in place.

"We created road rules, driver training, and licenses with the invention of cars. We've unleashed AI to the masses with no regulation or guidance, and for the business community in particular, there are huge challenges in ensuring the growth of AI technologies are safe, responsible, and transparent," said Mr Hawes.

"While AI has enormous social and economic benefits for all Australians, and we're seeing direct examples of this through our members, there are challenges to overcome, a chief one being the threat of workers and businesses being left behind," said Mr Hawes.

This week saw the arrival of a widely cited open letter warning of the risk of human extinction from Open AI, featuring signatures from high-profile executives in the US. It follows a call earlier this year from Elon Musk to place a six-month pause in AI models.

Mr Hawes said these types of apocalyptic visions of AI could be metered by useful policy discussion. Business Hunter will host an AI Summit at the end of the month in an effort to drive policy, and increase awareness of the capabilities and considerations for implementing elements of AI.

“Drawing on our experiences of crossing multiple other technology thresholds in recent decades, such as computers, the internet, email, and mobile phones, a broad range of emotive and practical responses is to be expected, and as a community, we need to sort out the facts from fiction,” said Mr Hawes.

The Summit will feature presentations from the Australian Human Rights Commissioner and the Australian Government-funded National AI Centre.

“The discussion of ethical and safe application of AI is one we’re keen and excited to bring to the Hunter and we’re honoured to achieve that through representatives who are leading the charge for the nation,” said Mr Hawes.

Mr Hawes said the Summit would provide an ideal platform to provide feedback on the Government’s responsible AI discussion papers.

“The Summit will offer a forum for very timely, rich discussion, and potentially an avenue to directly engage participants in our policy response to the Australian Government,” said Mr Hawes.

The Business Hunter Summit 2023: *AI, friend or foe* is supported by The Business Centre, University of Newcastle, Out of the Square, GHD, QT

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