



SUBMISSION TO THE ECONOMIC REFORM ROUNDTABLE

The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance

JULY 2025

ABOUT MEAA

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) is the largest and most established union and industry advocate for workers in the creative and cultural industries, with a history going back more than 110 years. Our members include people working in television, radio, theatre, film, entertainment venues, sporting stadia, journalists, actors, dancers, sportspeople, cartoonists, photographers, musicians, orchestral and opera performers as well as people working in public relations, advertising, book publishing and website production – in fact, everyone who works in the industries that inform or entertain. Our campaigns have included the protection of public broadcasting, press freedom, reform of screen industry policy, anti-racism and improved funding for the arts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance acknowledges the traditional custodians and cultures of the lands and seas on which we live and work. We pay our respects to all First Nations Peoples, Elders and Ancestors. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and stand in solidarity towards a shared future.

Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance submission to the Productivity Roundtable

The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in the lead up to the Government's Economic Reform Roundtable.

In their recent report, *AI in Australia: OpenAI's Economic Blueprint*, OpenAI claims that the adoption of AI can boost the Australian economy by up to \$115 billion.¹ Notably, to achieve this end, the company is demanding significant government intervention, including tax incentives, access to data, investment in AI-ready infrastructure like data centres, and access to affordable energy and natural resources – no small cost for government and taxpayers in Australia.²

MEAA is concerned by key aspects of this report and its attempt to influence government policy in relation to the productivity agenda. These concerns relate both to the veracity of claims made by OpenAI as well as the company's propensity to overlook the significant costs likely to be associated with the uptake of AI.

First, the economic benefits of adopting AI are still subject to widespread debate. While some economists believe that AI will deliver significant benefits, others disagree.³ Jon Whittle, the Director of Data61 at CSIRO, warns that "nascent research examining the relationship between AI and individual productivity shows mixed results".⁴ In turn, he contends that "the picture at a national level is even murkier".⁵

The company's productivity claims also rely on troubling propositions about the nature of productivity gains. In particular, they assume that "each hour automated by GAI and transitioned to other tasks means workers can produce more in a given timeframe".⁶ However, as the OECD highlights, instead of simply transitioning to other productive forms of labour, workers replaced by AI may instead turn "towards activities that have slower productivity growth", including "potentially less knowledge-intensive, personal

¹ OpenAI repeats claims originally made by Microsoft and the Tech Council. See OpenAI (2025) *AI in Australia: OpenAI's Economic Blueprint*, <https://cdn.openai.com/global-affairs/61b341bc-56eb-46dc-b356-a621e02cb82d/openai-australia-economic-blueprint-july-2025.pdf>; Microsoft and Tech Council of Australia (2023) *Australia's Generative AI opportunity*, <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/19395/AQoN%20-%20Tech%20Council%20of%20Australia%20-%20received%20-%2020%20March%202024.pdf>

² OpenAI (2025) *AI in Australia: OpenAI's Economic Blueprint*, <https://cdn.openai.com/global-affairs/61b341bc-56eb-46dc-b356-a621e02cb82d/openai-australia-economic-blueprint-july-2025.pdf>

³ OECD (2024) *The impact of artificial intelligence on productivity, distribution, and growth*, https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2024/04/the-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-on-productivity-distribution-and-growth_d54e2842/8d900037-en.pdf

⁴ Whittle (2025) *Does AI actually boost productivity? The evidence is murky*, <https://theconversation.com/does-ai-actually-boost-productivity-the-evidence-is-murky-260690>

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ Microsoft and Tech Council of Australia (2023) *Australia's Generative AI opportunity*, <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/19395/AQoN%20-%20Tech%20Council%20of%20Australia%20-%20received%20-%2020%20March%202024.pdf>

services”.⁷ In this sense the replacement of work in the knowledge economy could end up pushing workers into less productive forms of work, thereby reducing the potential productivity gains resulting from the adoption of AI. This means, as the OECD report puts it, that “the [gains] in productivity growth from AI could be attenuated in the long run”.⁸

MEAA is also concerned that AI companies harbour too high market concentration to offer a competitive market for the provision of AI services.⁹ Where AI development and deployment is controlled by a few large firms – in this case, Google, Anthropic, and OpenAI – there is a danger that the gains from AI uptake will be captured by AI providers in the form of economic rents, instead of being broadly shared across the economy. This is because a lack of competition in the market enables providers to extract profits above what would be expected in a competitive market, for example, by setting higher prices.¹⁰

Furthermore, the AI transition is likely to come with significant negative effects on the labour market, overlooked in OpenAI’s report. The IMF estimates that in advanced economies, AI will affect about 60% of jobs worldwide.¹¹ Of these, they anticipate that about half will be negatively impacted. The IMF argues that in these cases, AI stands to replace key aspects of work, in turn potentially leading to “lower labour demand, leading to lower wages and reduced hiring”. “In the most extreme cases”, they continue, “some of these jobs may disappear”.¹²

MEAA members have been on the coalface of the AI transition. One key workforce group strongly negatively impacted by AI are voice actors.¹³ MEAA members and workers have testified to losing more than half of their work in this industry as companies turn to readily accessible, cheap, forms of automated voicework.¹⁴ These workers are now

⁷ OECD (2024) *The impact of artificial intelligence on productivity, distribution, and growth*, p. 22, https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2024/04/the-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-on-productivity-distribution-and-growth_d54e2842/8d900037-en.pdf

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 22

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 32-33

¹⁰ ACCC (2025) *Regulatory reform in digital platform markets is needed to improve competition and consumer outcomes*, <https://www.accc.gov.au/media-release/regulatory-reform-in-digital-platform-markets-is-needed-to-improve-competition-and-consumer-outcomes>

¹¹ International Monetary Fund (2024) *Gen-AI: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work*, <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2024/01/14/ai-will-transform-the-global-economy-lets-make-sure-it-benefits-humanity>

¹² International Monetary Fund (2024) *AI Will Transform the Global Economy. Let’s Make Sure It Benefits Humanity*, <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2024/01/14/ai-will-transform-the-global-economy-lets-make-sure-it-benefits-humanity>

¹³ MEAA (2024) *Stop AI theft: media, creative and arts workers demand action from government*, <https://www.meaa.org/mediaroom/stop-ai-theft-media-creative-and-arts-workers-demand-action-from-government/>; ABC (2024) *Australian voice artists losing work to their AI clones fear for the future*, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-05-24/australian-voice-artists-losing-work-to-their-ai-clones/103885430>

¹⁴ *Ibid*

being forced to enter low-paid and lower skilled work in order to supplement their income, leading to real wage decline.

AI also has the potential to devalue existing forms of work, especially in the creative sector. In particular, the entry of cheap and readily accessible AI-generated art tools onto the market has the potential to devalue human-led artistic production and undermine creatives' already-precarious incomes. Award-winning illustrator Dapo Adeola, for example, argues that "[AI generated art] reinforces the argument that what [artists] do is easy and we shouldn't be able to earn the money we command".¹⁵

There are also broader social, political, and cultural concerns related to the adoption of AI technologies. For one, the use of AI carries with it significant risks in terms of introducing error and bias into outputs. AI cannot meaningfully be relied upon to report facts, dates, and information correctly, and, as a result, has been known to routinely produce misinformation. This development has the potential to exacerbate journalism's crisis of trust by reducing the transparency, objectivity, and accuracy of news media, and in turn, degrade its perceived quality and value.

The negative impacts of AI on the workforce emphasise the urgent need for government to introduce economy wide AI regulation. MEAA has consistently argued for the need to introduce a range of reforms to mediate the negative impacts of AI on the workforce, as well as on society more broadly. These include the need to introduce an AI Act and AI regulator, mandate the compensation of content used to train AI, protect performers from unauthorised digital replicas, establish an enforceable system of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), and enact privacy reform to protect personal data from being used for the purposes training without genuine and informed consent.¹⁶

¹⁵ Shaffi, S. (2024) "It's the opposite of art': why illustrators are furious about AI", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2023/jan/23/its-the-opposite-of-art-why-illustrators-are-furious-about-ai>

¹⁶ See MEAA (2024) *Submission to the Select Committee on Adopting Artificial Intelligence*, <https://www.meaa.org/mediaroom/meaa-submission-to-the-select-committee-on-adopting-artificial-intelligence/>; MEAA (2024) *Submission to the House of Representatives Inquiry into the Digital Transformation of Workplaces*, <https://www.meaa.org/mediaroom/submission-to-house-of-reps-inquiry-into-digital-transformation-of-workplaces/>