

Dear Select Committee on Adopting Artificial Intelligence,

Relevance to terms of reference: the concerns and suggestions in this letter relate directly to the terms of reference, in particular:

- "1b) risks and harms arising from the adoption of AI technologies, including bias, discrimination and error;"
- "1c) emerging international approaches to mitigating AI risks;"

My name is Sam Coggins, I'm a 28 years old and I'm an Australian PhD student at the Australian National University researching impacts of AI on farmers and agriculture. I'm writing this letter about mitigating catastrophic risks of AI because I care deeply about the lives of me, of my family, of my friends, of you reading this submission, and of other people in Australia and overseas. I think these risks are pressing and I think there are commonsense steps the Australian Government can take to mitigate them.

This view is shared by many Australians, as shown by research published by Ready Research and The University of Queensland. "Preventing dangerous and catastrophic outcomes from AI" was the top action recommended by surveyed Australians when asked "what should the Australian Government focus on when it comes to Artificial Intelligence?" Please see the summary and technical report linked here for details on this large-scale 2024 survey and its findings: <https://aigovernance.org.au/survey/> [Last accessed 24 April 2024]. Personal conversations with my friends and family in Canberra (ACT) and Rylstone (NSW) have confirmed that everyday Australians share these safety concerns and want the Australian Government to take them seriously as well.

These concerns are also shared by experts in AI. AI leaders, including Bill Gates, the CEO of OpenAI, the CEO of Google DeepMind, signed the statement that "mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war." There are logical credible concerns about AI being used for cyber-attacks, creating novel biological weapons, or autonomous AI systems that are not aligned with human values going out of control.

I suggest that we follow the lead of countries like the US, UK, Canada and Japan in establishing a National AI Safety Institute. Such an institute could begin working towards safe AI without the need for new legislation. An Australian AI Safety Institute would have three core priorities: evaluating advanced AI systems, driving foundational AI safety research, and partnering nationally and internationally on AI safety. Such a institute could meaningfully support safe AI domestically and internationally, improving Australia's image as well as the safety of Australians.

In support of the integrity of the submissions process you're facilitating, I'd like to make transparent that I used AI to help me word this letter. I still personally and actively shaped all of the arguments and wording in this letter and hence see this letter as my own, as an Australian citizen and caring person.

In conclusion, I've invested more than two hours of my personal time writing this letter because AI presents real threats to real Australians like you and me. I think creating an Australian AI Safety Institute would be a commonsense and effective action to take to mitigate these risks.

Kind regards,

Sam Coggins