QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE:

Your recommendations also mention establishing institutional access to licensing agreements across the education sector. What do you know to be the status quo, and what sorts of challenges are there with particular states or schools? Is that a role you see the federal government playing a part in, in terms of establishing institutional access to licensing?

ANSWER:

In addition to the answer provided on the challenges and on the role of the federal government at the hearing, the following is provided in relation to the current status quo:

In 2023 generative AI systems were banned in most Australian public schools (this ban has been lifted for the 2024 school year). South Australia was the only state to not implement a ban on generative AI and worked with Microsoft to create a tailored generative AI system for use in South Australian Schools – with increased restrictions and privacy for users. This was rolled out to 8 public high schools in an ongoing trial. Other schools in the state were allowed to use other AI tools at their discretion. In 2024, the New South Wales Government announced a trial of its own custom generative AI system that blends multiple large language models and has extra protections for students. 16 public primary and secondary schools are taking part in the six-month trial.

Independent/private schools have individual arrangements making it difficult to determine exactly which schools are offering institutional access. Survey data from the Association of Heads of Independent Schools Australia suggests that 74% of respondents use generative AI in certain classes/year levels/subjects, and 12% have school-approved generative AI tools accessible for students while at school. This may include schools that provide AI licences or other specialised AI learning tools.

In higher education, the use of generative AI is mostly ad-hoc, with rules differing between institutions, but also within institutions. For example, ANU leaves decisions down to course conveners. No Australian University provides university-wide licences at this stage, but this has been offered at international universities (e.g. The University of Hong Kong offers licences for several generative AI services including ChatGPT and DALL-E and Cornell University is trialling institutional access to AI services).