

MEDIA RELEASE

Writers push back against any changes to copyright law for Artificial Intelligence

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The Australian Writers' Guild (AWG) and Australian Writers' Guild Authorship Collecting Society (AWGACS) have rejected the suggestion that a Text and Data Mining (TDM) Exception for the training of AI models be considered by the government, and expressed disappointment at the Productivity Commission's interim report.

The report "[Harnessing data and digital technology](#)" seeks feedback on a "TDM exception" to the *Copyright Act*, to allow 'training' of AI models on copyrighted works. Despite the interim report saying that such an exception would not be a blank cheque, writers are skeptical.

"The Productivity Commissioner has [asked](#), 'Are our laws fit for purpose with AI?' but the real question is, why should we change our laws to make things easier for foreign big tech, instead of making things better for Australian workers, people who actually produce things in Australia?" said AWG and AWGACS CEO Claire Pullen.

"The Productivity Commission has conceded that large AI models have already been trained on copyrighted materials owned by Australians. It should be recommending tech companies follow Australian law and stop stealing from creative workers, who are responsible for an industry that [contributes](#) over \$60 billion to our economy."

Pullen notes there is a particularly acute risk to First Nations works, and any proposed TDM exception would fly in the face of the Productivity Commission's own recommendations on fake First Nations art. Publicly available generative AI tools can be made to generate counterfeits, without regard to cultural protocols, community consent, or remuneration.

Tech companies operating Large Language Models (LLMs) have [conceded](#) that AI models rely on copyrighted works that are [taken](#) without consent or payment, and Australian workers have already seen their works [stolen](#), including some of Australia's most iconic plays and books. At a Senate [inquiry](#) last year, big tech companies repeatedly dodged questions about the provenance of work used in their AI models, and faced sustained [questioning](#) about the use of Australian voices, books and films in their models.

"It is disappointing to see a request for feedback about how things might be made easier for big tech, but nothing addressing the lost productivity and income for Australia and Australian creatives as a result of the infringement that has already taken place," Pullen said. "It seems clear that the Productivity Commission favours weakening our existing laws."

Australian Writers' Guild

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ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN WRITERS' GUILD

The Australian Writers' Guild is the professional association for Australian screen and stage writers across film, television, theatre, radio and interactive media and has protected and promoted their creative and professional interests for more than 60 years.

The Guild's vision is to see stage and screen writers thrive as a dynamic and integral part of Australian storytelling: shaping, reflecting and enhancing the Australian cultural voice in all its diversity.

The Guild fights to improve professional standards, conditions and remuneration for Australian stage and screen writers, to pursue a thriving industry environment, and to protect and advance the creative rights of our members.

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