AI Policy & Regulation

In 2021, the Australian government emphasized the importance of applying existing regulatory frameworks to AI by releasing an AI Action Plan. This plan aimed to enhance AI capabilities and promote the development and adoption of reliable, secure, and ethical AI technologies in Australia.

In June 2023, a discussion paper was published to invite public consultation on whether Australia's current governance structures adequately support the safe and responsible use and development of AI. By January 2024, the government provided an interim response to these discussions, focusing on the safe and responsible implementation of AI. The interim response outlines a commitment to a risk-based regulatory framework, which will impose obligations on developers and deployers of AI based on the level of risk their applications pose. This approach aims to ensure that low-risk AI innovations can thrive without unnecessary regulatory burdens while safeguarding against the potential harms of high-risk AI applications.

Engagement and Initiatives in AI Governance

Australia has adopted UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI highlight its commitment to ethical AI development globally. Domestically, Australia's 2025 Digital Transformation Strategy guides its AI integration efforts. The government plans to establish an advisory body of industry and academic experts to create a legislative framework for "high risk" AI applications. Additionally, the Human Technology Institute at the University of Technology Sydney published a report on the state of AI governance in Australia.

The National Science and Technology Council's Rapid Response Information Report on generative AI provides insights into this emerging technology. In March 2020, the AI Standards Roadmap: Making Australia's Voice Heard was released, developed by Standards Australia and commissioned by the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources. This roadmap aims to ensure Australia influences global AI standards development effectively.

Useful resources

- 2025 Digital Transformation Strategy
- Rapid Response Information Report on generative AI
- Australia's Artificial Intelligence Ethics Framework
- National Artificial Intelligence Centre
- Australia's AI Ethics Principles
- Artificial Intelligence Expert Group

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