



Recommendations on AI Policy

Direct quotations from three submissions, September–October 2026

The 30 recommendations below are quoted directly from the submissions. An ellipsis (...) marks text omitted between sentences. Each item links to the full submission on the Institute's [Submissions & Notes page](#).

Australian Priorities for Navigating the Crisis in AI Policy

*Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence, 14 September 2026 (Submission 165).
Greg Austin, Gary Waters and Glenn Withers.*

1. Treat AI as a national and international crisis

“Policymaking for AI should be treated as a crisis of the highest order rather than as a series of isolated technical or regulatory problems. AI presents existential risks, rapidly accelerating change, profound uncertainty and intensified competition among major powers.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

2. Rolling 90-day AI action plans

“To reflect this urgency, one immediate concrete policy is for every substantive actor with a stake in AI policy to be called upon to adopt a rolling 90-day AI action plan, with the cycle scaled to the actor: government, peak body or individual organisation. They should report publicly against it at the end of each cycle.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

3. A more ambitious National AI Plan on international models

“Australia could follow Singapore’s model of a good AI Plan, directed by a national AI council, chaired by the Prime Minister, sitting above policy, infrastructure and assurance stack. That architecture could take on the EU’s more explicit security spine, writing AI-enabled threats and

agentic systems explicitly into critical-infrastructure obligations. And Australia could adopt the UK's discipline of a published delivery dashboard, so the national AI roadmap is accountable against dated commitments rather than aspiration and generalities."

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

4. Act now through partnerships with middle powers

"What follows from this is that Australia cannot wait for international regimes to stabilise. Operational action at the micro and meso levels will be essential before macro-level regimes settle, and that action is available now through partnerships. The European Union, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada and Singapore should become first-rank AI partners for Australia, alongside engagement with the US and China."

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

5. A layered AI strategy

"Expensive frontier models should be reserved for complex research, sophisticated agents and genuinely high-stakes tasks. Routine work should be routed to cheaper open-weight or specialised models according to cost, capability and risk."

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

6. Independent technology impact assessment

"Establish an independent technology impact assessment capability for AI, sited outside the agencies that deploy AI and reporting to the Parliament, with its first assessment commissioned in 2027. ... We apply to industry the test that an undertaking enforceable only by the party that gave it is a statement of intent. The same test should apply to government."

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

7. A National AI Education Mission

"Establish a National AI Education Mission under the National AI Plan, jointly governed by the Commonwealth and the states, with scheduled milestone dates and published capability targets. Deliver this plan through nationally recognised units of competency, shared subjects and micro-credentials that can be stood up in months, rather than through degree cycles that will not produce graduates until 2030."

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

8. At least \$1 billion for AI education and research

"Australia cannot claim leadership in AI policy through symbolic gestures without massive investment in AI-related education and research, including about the technologies and the social implications. The initial reform budget would need to approach at least \$1 billion over the first five years, with a commitment to education (teaching) at least as great as that allocated to research."

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

9. Regulate without relying on corporate goodwill

“Australia should not design its own arrangements on the assumption that the American political system will discipline these actors on Australia’s behalf. Australia should therefore legislate the expectations rather than publish them, require disclosure of political and lobbying expenditure by major AI providers operating here, fund evaluation capability that is independent of the firms being evaluated, and remove self-attestation from procurement.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

10. Binding obligations over voluntary pledges

“The Institute’s consistent position is that binding legal obligations should be preferred to voluntary industry commitments. Voluntary regimes allow the most capable private actors to choose their regulatory venue, delay implementation, or shape less than rigorous standards through lobbying.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

11. Get affected populations into the room

“That commitment should be concrete through measures such as standing representation for affected populations on AI advisory and governance bodies, funded participation rather than unpaid consultation, and the same access to officials that industry currently enjoys. Peak bodies are the natural aggregators, capable of converting dispersed concern into technically credible submissions, and of representing workforces and sectors that cannot individually sustain engagement. They should be resourced to do so.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

12. Build capability without unmanaged dependence

“The central policy task is to build national AI capability without creating unmanaged dependence on foreign models, infrastructure or providers. This means focusing on the main control layers that will enhance sovereignty: data residency, model behaviour, inference, and auditability.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_2e45614d751c43898fca8292cca72ca3.pdf

AI Data Centres: Community Consultation, Accountability and Australia’s National Interest

Submission to the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee inquiry on Artificial Intelligence and Data Centres, 1 September 2026 (Submission 247).

13. A legislated national minimum standard

“Major facilities should be subject to statutory requirements — not departmental ‘expectations’ — covering community participation, electricity, water, emissions, thermal effects, cumulative impacts, siting, monitoring and public reporting, with legislation identifying the Commonwealth authority responsible for enforcement and its interaction with state and

territory regulators. States and territories should remain free to impose stronger requirements, but the Commonwealth standard should set an enforceable floor.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

14. Mandatory early consultation

“This should be triggered before location, energy supply and core design decisions become effectively irreversible, with the trigger point defined in legislation or regulation and occurring before material site, grid-connection or design commitments are finalised, rather than left to developer discretion.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

15. A designated accountable decision-maker

“This authority should be designated in legislation rather than described generically, so communities know which specific authority is responsible for evaluating their concerns and certifying that consultation requirements have been satisfied — with that authority’s decisions subject to independent review.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

16. A genuine causer-pays principle

“Additional electricity, network, water, monitoring and mitigation costs created by private infrastructure should be borne by developers and operators as a condition of approval; any exception allowing cost transfer to households or taxpayers should require explicit, published, time-limited justification. This would build on the Government’s existing expectation that data centres cover their share of transmission, distribution and water-infrastructure costs.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

17. Clear, tiered consequences for non-compliance

“Failure to complete mandatory consultation or required impact assessments should prevent an application progressing until deficiencies are remedied. Materially false or misleading disclosures should attract existing or enhanced penalties. Serious or repeated breaches of community-protection conditions should trigger escalating consequences under the applicable statutory regime, including supervision where authorised by law.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

18. Mandatory cumulative precinct assessment

“National standards should therefore require forward-looking cumulative assessment wherever multiple facilities exist, are approved, or are reasonably foreseeable within the same precinct. Planning standards from the NSW government already require comprehensive precinct-level EIS, not just specific to a single project.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

19. Baselines and monitoring for waste heat

“The appropriate response is not to assume that it will occur at Lane Cove at the reported magnitude. It is to require developers to establish pre-development temperature baselines, undertake site-specific thermal modelling and monitor actual conditions after operations commence.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

20. A statutory Community Response Statement

“This would not make community opinion determinative. It would make the responsible authority accountable for demonstrating that consultation has materially informed the decision-making process rather than merely accompanying it.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

21. Streamlining without reducing scrutiny

“Streamlining should mean removing unnecessary duplication, not reducing scrutiny. ... Parliament should therefore clarify which processes are intended to be streamlined and which protections will remain non-negotiable.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

22. Regulate the four ownership layers separately

“Because infrastructure, hardware, software and data have different owners, different risk profiles and different legitimate levers of control, policy should name each layer separately: critical-infrastructure rules for the physical site where the SOCI Act applies; residency and privacy requirements for the data layer; security and access controls for remote software administration; and content/copyright licensing regimes for training inputs. Bundling all four into a single ‘data centre’ policy conversation weakens national control while treating them as four distinct regulatory objects can strengthen national control.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

23. Invest in AI policy expertise well beyond current levels

“Australia should build a standing, well-resourced AI policy capability with several competing centres of analysis addressing technical, legal, economic, social and strategic considerations in a multidisciplinary manner, networked across government, universities, industry and civil society while preserving independent analysis. ... Without deeper capability, Australia risks negotiating major long-term technology and infrastructure arrangements without sufficient independent analytical capacity.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

24. Public equity or co-investment in strategic projects

“For example, Australia could require foreign investors in large data-centre projects to fund, on an untied basis, a significant expansion of AI research and education activity, nationally or

locally. Related proposals, such as equity stakes, a compute reserve and public-sector access rights, as advocated by Dr Raffaele Ciriello, are worth considering.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

25. Diversify dependency rather than trying to eliminate it

“Since chip allocation, export controls and remote software governance sit largely outside Australian law, the more realistic goal is redundancy: encouraging multiple hardware suppliers and multiple AI-company tenants across the data-centre estate, rather than concentration on one or two foreign firms whose home-government decisions could unilaterally affect Australian capacity — including diversifying toward the European Union as a supplier of AI investment and technology.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_0c9509baded94d33a5c3e3e5b1257e16.pdf

AI Labs and Proposed National Rules: Getting It Right by Addressing the Big Issues First

Submission on the Australian Government discussion paper “Getting it right: Building AI infrastructure that works for Australia”, 3 October 2026. Gary Waters, Glenn Withers and Greg Austin.

26. Verify delivery and enforce consequences

“However, it is not simply a matter of laying these out as the Government has; it must also verify that the large data centres actually deliver and ensure that there are consequences for non-performance. It is up to the Australian Government to determine the numbers and scale of data centres needed to support AI capabilities, whilst ensuring that meets the nation’s needs, and that they are socially and environmentally sustainable. A laissez faire economic model for data centres (where real estate developers or AI companies drive the choices) will not be in Australia’s national interest, nor will it be sustainable.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_71da354f8d6d47a2b0d095d42bff531a.pdf

27. Simple, consistent standards aligned with national priorities

“Hence, Australia’s AI standards must provide a simple and consistent regulatory approach to increase clarity, speed up approvals, and streamline compliance, while promoting investment. Large data centres must be aligned with broader national priorities, and thus implementation of the standards will be key.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_71da354f8d6d47a2b0d095d42bff531a.pdf

28. Commit to demand flexibility at the design stage

“Committing large data centres to this flexibility while their facilities are still being designed would realise greater benefits than if that flexibility is phased in gradually as the data centres evolve or after they have been built. Job-scheduling software is already available and could be standardised across the industry.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/_files/ugd/15144d_71da354f8d6d47a2b0d095d42bff531a.pdf

29. A separate Parliamentary review of conditions for AI training

“This should be subject to a separate Parliamentary review, ideally informed by priority analysis from the new Australian Tertiary Education Commission to ensure all higher education and all vocational education and training roles are reflected.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/files/ugd/15144d_71da354f8d6d47a2b0d095d42bff531a.pdf

30. Control the layers of the AI stack most critical for resilience

“But it’s not just about building and deploying AI systems, it must also be about our ability to govern and adapt them as things evolve and do so in a way that serves national interests. We must maintain control over the layers of the AI stack that are most critical for resilience – the data, and inference capacity.”

Source: https://www.socialcyber.co/files/ugd/15144d_71da354f8d6d47a2b0d095d42bff531a.pdf