

What will it take for you to trust artificial intelligence?

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 12.01AM, TUESDAY, 18 AUGUST 2020

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is helping to improve our society, enhance Australia's wellbeing, improve environmental sustainability and create a more equitable, inclusive and fair society. But as we work to reshape government delivery with AI, are we asking the right questions?

The role of AI, including policy implications and the nature of industry in society, is being discussed today in a live-stream event co-hosted by the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) and the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA).

ACOLA CEO Ryan Winn said the event will feature a keynote presentation by Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel AO and a panel discussion with ACOLA's AI Expert Group and key Government officials leading AI implementation.

"The event will give rise to further discussion on the future opportunities and challenges of AI in industry and Government operations and service delivery, and what implications this will have on society for 2030," Mr Winn said.

In his speech, Dr Finkel will pose the question: "What will it take for you to trust artificial intelligence".

"Last year, I launched ACOLA's AI report, which serves us as a foundation for the future and is the basis of our discussions today. The report notes that there's no magic solution to any policy challenge—least of all the innovative applications of AI. Instead, it comes back to the essential foundation of trust," Dr Finkel said.

ACOLA's Chair and President of the Australian Academy of Humanities, Professor Joy Damousi FASSA FAHA added that "AI and other new technologies can be poorly understood across policy makers and society, which is a barrier to their uptake. This is even though they present significant opportunities to improve the liveability, wellbeing and productivity of our cities and regions."

Mr Winn said the AI discussion was timely with a number of emerging technologies offering extraordinary opportunities for Australia. The AI report and ACOLA's Internet of Things (IoT) horizon scanning report (to be released later this year) highlight how new technologies will improve our lives—from enabling smart transport, optimising manufacturing to improving health care.

"Discussions like we are having today help us all to ask the right questions that support robust yet rapid research and awareness that can see Australia embrace the opportunities AI and other new technologies offer to maintain our global competitiveness in an increasingly digitalised world," Mr Winn said.

The event will be livestreamed between 9am and 10.30am AEST. The event is open to all. A recording can be obtained on request. More information is provided below.

Media contact

For more information or to arrange interviews, contact: Ryan Winn, Chief Executive on 0484 814 040.

The role of AI in Australia in 2030—event

This live stream event will showcase the Commonwealth funded ACOLA AI report released in July 2019, the discussion will highlight the importance of multidisciplinary thinking, with a chance to increase productive dialogue between academia and policymakers.

Panel members are:

Professor Genevieve Bell AO, Director, 3A Institute, Australian National University
Dr Simon Barry (Panellist), Deputy Director, Data 61
Narelle Luchetti, Head of Division, Digital Economy and Technology, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
David Hazlehurst, Deputy Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, IPAA ACT Councillor
Information about the event is available on the IPAA website. Media can register to attend.

ACOLA AI report

A copy of the AI report can be downloaded from the ACOLA website.

ACOLA IoT report

The IoT report is expected to be released later this year. Information about the research project underpinning the report is on the ACOLA website.

About ACOLA

ACOLA is the forum whereby Australia's Learned Academies and our Associate members come together to contribute expert advice to inform national policy; and to develop innovative solutions to complex global problems and emerging national needs. Through the learned academies, ACOLA has access to more than 3,000 of Australia's greatest minds to bring together critical thinking and evidence to inform robust policy decisions.

Australian Chief Scientist's keynote

Dr Finkel's speech will be available from 0900 AEST Tuesday 19 August on the Office of Chief Scientist website.