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TRANSCRIPT OF EVENT

Express Summit: AI in the public sector

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KATE DRIVER: What does 2:19 AM on the 29th of August 1997 mean to you? There has got to be some children of the 80s. 29th of August 1997, 2:19 AM. No. It was the date that Skynet became self-aware. And that has framed how we think about and know AI in popular culture today. So, when you Google AI, machine learning, when you become fluent in memes and use them through your messaging services, either on your phone or on laptops, inevitably a Terminator reference will come up. And so, we are really battling a popular Hollywood view of AI as the overlord that will take over our jobs and change our world forever. But of course, the 29th of August 1997 came and went, and it turns out Skynet did not become self-aware, at least to our knowledge. Y2K happened, and at 12:01 AM on the 1st of January 2000, when everybody filled their bathtubs full of water in case the water network went down.

Did people do that? Do people remember that? Those of a certain vintage might. The network did not go down. So, we are living with something that if you were here for our opening this afternoon, we were talking about something that really, it's quite scary. And we've heard phrases like scary fear. We thought about things that really are beyond human scale. And so, the ambition today for the discussions was for us to humanise it, to place us in a context where we can grapple with these as human beings and keep humans in the AI conversation. And really what we have learned in a lot of the discussions today, and I'm really excited to introduce our panel to you shortly, is that change is scary. Change is happening rapidly. Six months is now an awfully long time in the development of AI. But change moves at the speed of trust.

Change moves at the speed of trust. It is still a human thing to trust or not trust, to have feelings. Because you feel something before you know something. Your gut tells you something. Now your gut might be a well-informed, differential search engine. It might think about different things in diverse ways, but I can guarantee you, you know something after you have felt it. So, we are dealing with a uniquely human challenge here. We are also dealing with something that has a lot of mystiques about it. And we heard in one of the masterclasses that I was sitting in this afternoon, AI is not magic and that's an important thing to understand,

because we have to have a good culture, we have to have good thinking, good systems, good governance, good guardrails, good people involved in these decisions. There is a role for high-risk literacy, for risk confidence, for understanding in the public sector where regulation is useful.

It provides guardrails, it provides safety, it reinforces trust. And when regulation is not useful, where it stymies, where it stifles, where it provides blockers that really aren't particularly useful, and government struggles to keep up with industry, because as we've found through some of our discussions today, people will adopt at the speed that they are ready for. Whether or not anyone else is ready is not a question that goes outside of their own sphere. And so, I also want us to think about the community that we're sitting in. So, we did an acknowledgement of country when we began today and that spans multiple generations. We're now in a sixth-generation workforce in the country across the world. So, the parents of the baby boomers, the silent generation as they were called, are in their 80's and their 90's. They're still highly influential. They have shaped the way the baby boomers have approached leadership and thought.

There are several eighty plus year olds that I engage with regularly on boards, on committees. They're still regularly active in shaping our world. And then the alphas started high school this year, and the alphas will be entering the world of casual work in the next few years. And so, we're about to have, for the first time in human history, a six-generation workforce. Socially, our constructs are based around three. We think about our parents, we think about our children, we think about our grandparents and our parents or our children and our grandchildren. It's very hard to conceptualise six-generations, but these are the kinds of things we need to think about because the generation after the alphas, the ones that started kindergarten this year when they started high school, will statistically live until the 22nd century. Their career will be as leaders in the 22nd century.

Now when you stop and think about that, and you think about those children have started kindergarten this year in the 19th century agrarian calendar-based education system. Do you know the reason that there's

a long summer holiday? It's so the children can go into the fields and bring in the crops. It's a 19th century agrarian calendar for a 22nd century workforce. So, we have a little bit of work to do. Now I have an esteemed group of people sitting with me on stage. You've heard enough from me now, so allow me to introduce them. I have Shane Little now... Everybody has such impressive CVs. You will have to excuse me for reading. Shane Little is a managing director of Enterprise Solutions for APAC for Hays. Shane has just clicked into his 24th year in the staffing and workforce solutions industry.

And while some might describe him as a veteran, his desire for self-learning and positive impact means he treats each week as if it were his first. He has a history for running successful businesses and takes pride in his ability to identify and develop talent whilst at the same time creating lasting partnerships with his clients. As MD of Enterprise Solutions for APAC Hays, Shane is responsible for the delivery of market leading talent solutions to a range of clients across Australia and New Zealand. This involves leadership and development of talented sales delivery and operational teams, while maintaining senior client relationships. Having worked in the talent acquisition industry for such a sizable period of his career, he's incredibly passionate about the high value that talent and talent advisory can play for organisations.

That's just the first panel member. My second panel member, Christina Graves, is a special counsel for Minter Ellison. Christina is a privacy and information law specialist with more than 20 years' experience supporting government, private sector, and the not-for-profit clients. Christina advises on privacy and secrecy, compliance and risk management, data governance, and information access and management. She's undertaken privacy impact assessments for many of the government clients, many of whom are represented in the room here today, including those involving digital transformation and innovative technologies. Christina is independently recognised by best lawyers, including lawyer of the year in 2023 in privacy and data security law category. Congratulations to you. At the end here I have James Roberts from the Commonwealth Bank. James is the general manager of fraud and scam strategy and governance, Commonwealth Bank of

Australia. James is currently the GM of fraud and scam strategy, overseeing the bank's strategic approach to prevention, detection, and response to external fraud and scams.

James serves on the board of the Australian Financial Crime Exchange. I bet they're fantastic meetings to go to. He's worked in the financial services and fraud industry for over 20 years and has extensive experience in investigating and managing fraud and financial crimes. James was previously general manager of CBAs Group Investigations Intelligence and Fraud advisory division, and holds a Bachelor of Science, majoring in psychology. Prior to immigrating to Australia in 2015, James was the head of group financial control at Standard Bank in South Africa, managing their prevention, crime detection and response to external and internal fraud. And finally, we have Corryn Webb, associate director at KPMG. Corryn has over 20 years of experience in the IT industry and is a former executive of Women Information Communications and Technology, WIC, for short, because we love an acronym in this room. Corryn is passionate about empowering organisations through their people specialising in culture change, strategy governance, and technology adoption.

And as an associate director for the transformational change team at KPMG, Corryn leads the delivery of projects within the federal government, defence health, ageing, and human services as well as the private sector. So, I have an amazing group of people sitting here on the stage, many of whom led our masterclasses today. Now as much as I'm having a lovely, enjoyable, nerdy time asking lots of questions, I'd really like to hear from you. Today's session, at this point in the event, hopefully you've warmed up. Judging from the buzz in the room, there's lots to ask. So, I'm going to kick off with a panel question. I'll ask each of our panellists to reflect for a couple of minutes and then I'd really like to hear from you in the room. Otherwise, you're just going to have to hear more Terminator and bad 80s movies references from me.

So please spare your colleagues that risk. So many of the people sitting in the room here are a part of the APS, and I have several public servants from the ACT as well. Pillar four of the APS reform agenda looks to

build capability for commonwealth public servants to do their job well. There are parallel initiatives right across the public sector as we grapple with the capability to do things. So, what are those capabilities, both human and technological, in the AI age? We might start at the end of the panel and work our way down.

SHANE LITTLE: Thanks Kate. I'm going to specifically talk about the human element of that, because it came up in the masterclass that I hosted around the skills that we should be focused on today to protect ourselves, or up skill ourselves for an AI future. And you referenced it earlier on when you talked about the six generations that will be in the workforce imminently. It is humans that will bring AI to life and really engage it in a productive way in our organisations. It's humans that will make the decision where and when and how we use it, and therefore the understanding of our business needs and our customers' wants and needs, and the ability to interpret that into meaningful technological change, I think, is what is really going to make the difference to an organisation.

And if you foster a culture of learning across your organisation and allow people to be vulnerable with what they don't know, that should lead to an openness and an understanding of what skills exist today and what you need to focus on developing for the future. And I'm specifically referring to the soft skills that will help you bring technology, automation and AI to life in the future.

CHRISTINA GRAVES: Being a lawyer, I am also going to confess, I'm not confident in speaking on the technological parts of it. So, I'll also look at the human aspects of AI implementation and capability. Like Shane said, I would also agree that education is a significant part, ensuring that your staff understand how AI technology works, its capabilities, limitations, and the range of legal risks that can arise, which are quite wide-ranging. And that can vary depending on your particular use cases and the planning in advance in setting up your data and AI governance frameworks to support some of the thinking around AI use. And that will include, just touching again on the human elements, not removing the human factor altogether out of AI use and implementation and embedding some of those core human-centric values. So, there's things about fairness and transparency and

so on, and how you're going to incorporate those values into your AI use cases and projects.

CORRYN WEBB: It's like teams. Have I got my camera on? I also think so, in terms of education, as everyone said, it's just providing people with a safe space to be able to play and explore and be able to use the tools. But as leaders, if you're a leader in the room, if you're managing people, make sure that you're leading by example. So, use the tools yourself, make sure that you're comfortable with them, and then be able to share that experience with your people. It's important to be able to communicate that message as well.

JAMES ROBERTS: Yeah, maybe then look at it the unpleasant way, the other people. So, there's a bunch of good people trying to do good stuff. There's a bunch of bad people trying to do very bad stuff out there with the same technologies that you're using and acknowledging that you must have some sort of plan, acknowledging that this is going on in the background, and that if you stay still, you can guarantee an asymmetry between your capabilities internally and what criminal syndicates have externally. So, a bit of need to plan to be cautious, to be observant of the legal frameworks as well, but to have some degree of motion and oomph behind your need to progress in that area, from a crime prevention side.

KATE DRIVER: Spoken like the head of fraud of the Commonwealth Bank. Would I expect. Can I ask people to pop their hands up if they have questions in the room, so that one of the team can run a microphone out to you? Please don't be shy or there will be plenty of 80s movies references. While we're running a mic over here, to my right, you mentioned staying ahead, James, of actors who may not have the best of intentions. The Commonwealth Bank is one of those organisations that really must think multiple steps ahead, and we sit in a room with a lot of people who are involved in regulation or lawmaking. How do you navigate a legal system when you are moving so much faster than actors will allow you to take 15 months to draught something, three years to consult, four years to pass, an election in the middle? How do you even approach that problem?

JAMES ROBERTS: Very, very carefully. So, I don't get fired, I think would be the summary on that one. I think the underlying point though is that there's an asymmetry between a collection of people working against you, that have no regulatory framework to comply with, whereas there are obviously very extensive and appropriate regulatory frameworks. I think things in the privacy reform space are interesting. I think we must be careful to make sure that we strike the right balance between protecting people from having their identities et cetera, compromised, and allowing the protectors to protect the people who have been compromised. So that balance is incredibly hard to strike, but that's the big one that I watch out for the most.

KATE DRIVER: It sure is a big one. We had a question over here.

SPEAKER 6: Okay, so this is a legal and a technical question. You mentioned embedding fairness into our AI systems. But even in a legal system, not all things are fair, and algorithms like how do you... In your mind, what are you thinking about when you're talking about embedding fairness in an AI system?

CHRISTINA GRAVES: I suppose that question has several elements, and it does depend on the context. If I'm putting my privacy lawyer hat on, and you're thinking about how AI might generate outputs, particularly outputs that might not have been contemplated by an individual, new types of data, particularly the sensitive kinds of data, there's an element of fairness of, particularly in the context of what transparency was around the use of AI and the production of those outputs. How is the output going to be used? Will it be used in a way that might have adverse impacts for individuals? So those are some of the kinds of issues you'd think about in considering, I guess, the aspect of fairness, general things about community expectations and concerns that might arise, and how that might be mitigated. It's not to say that you can't use AI, but it might just involve developing other strategies to balance that element of fairness against the outcome that you want to achieve.

CORRYN WEBB: In addition to that, so in our masterclass we also talked about the high-quality data that you've got going into the system. So, I guess it's just making sure that people are managing, reading what's going in. And if things are not suitable for being used for AI purposes, then

obviously that stays out. So, it's having those quality checks in place to make sure that all that data that's going in is going to be suitable for use. Absolutely.

KATE DRIVER: Other questions from the room? I've got one down the front here. If you could just wait for the mic so people can hear.

SPEAKER 7: As with many fraud detection and prevention scenarios, so sharing of data, and opening that connectivity to ingest many sources of data, as well as contribute back is quite important. And in the government context, especially what my perspective, it's traditionally been siloed, protected or higher closed environment. So sometimes that limits the collective ability to combat and disrupt fraud in many senses. For example, let's say Telstra identifies a frequent stream, some kind of scenario, whereas Commonwealth Bank, with that information, can perhaps add higher controls or [inaudible]. It's very similar. Fraud can happen in social services scenario or other scenarios were sharing that information and opening from that traditional mindset of closed, is secure to more sharing that information can achieve better outcomes. So, from the panel perspective, what are your thoughts on how government clients should approach this scenario where that, okay, we can use AI within our network. I understand there are challenges as well, but how do you approach that in a balanced way?

KATE DRIVER: We might start that with James. I think what I'm understanding is drawing on the industry experience that you're referring to, how can government take the lessons from that, working within its network of networks, servicing the different community sectors it does? But perhaps we might start with you, James on that perspective and then we might move to the privacy aspect of that, Christina, and the collection of the data.

JAMES ROBERTS: Yeah, there's a bit of crossover, because the AI's just the top of the stack. If you've not got the privacy bit right with the data, the whole thing's just going to crumble at an inconvenient time on you. In the current governing Australian privacy principles, there is a segment, APP6, which gives carve-outs for the general exemption for the general situation, from memory, for combating crime. And from a private sector side, the devil is in that, but also in the terms and conditions that

the people subscribe to. So telcos actually do share the sim swap data with us, but it's the basis of APP6 plus the terms and conditions plus the organization's risk appetite, because I'm sure you would have infinitely more experience than I do in this, but it is possible to render different interpretations of the same piece of legislation or regulation type thing depending on your conservatism, depending on your interpretation of it type thing. I think personally there is room to grow the permissions for the sole purpose of preventing crime, but there are existing provisions there. I don't know if you have better, more accurate thoughts.

CHRISTINA GRAVES: No, I think essentially, you've got that right, James. There are a range of different exemptions that already exist under the APPs, and they are principle-based legislation, and they're not perfect, but they are intended to provide some flexibility for different contexts. So yes, you've got the consent exceptions, which might be things that could be covered off in conditions in terms of use, certainly where it's necessary for a law enforcement purpose for example. You've got those exceptions, and other ones that prevent serious harm and so on. So, there can be one or multiple bases on which you can collect, use and disclose personal information. But it is depending on the context, and there is a responsibility to be able to demonstrate, I guess, the necessity in the circumstances of handling personal information in a particular way.

KATE DRIVER: So, I might just draw on that thread a little more, because we've got the technical framework, but we're also focused on people and business at the centre of what we do as a public sector. Ultimately, we are in service to a public, which is our community. And if you haven't seen it already, I'd encourage you to look on the PMNC website. There was a pilot program run last year, the long-term insights briefing, and there was a lot of work done. It came out of the APS reform agenda, trying to look beyond the horizon for public servants. And there was a lot of thought that went into the selection of that topic, which was how might AI affect the trustworthiness of government services. And that work was very specifically targeted on that trustworthiness message for citizens.

I'm curious, and I'd like to bring in the rest of our panel from that trustworthiness aspect of the frameworks that you're then operating in both, from the perspective, Shane, of the people and the skills that create that trust environment. And then Corryn also the trustworthiness of how people engage in the tools. Because we can operate within frameworks, but calling back to how we open today's panel where change moves at the speed of trust, and we are in service to our community, what skills, Shane, do you think we need to focus on in our workforces to build that environment? And what are we recruiting for and are we recruiting for the right stuff?

SHANE LITTLE: I'm not so sure it's a skills question. More of a characteristics question or an attributes question, in that trust is created over time. People don't instantly trust, with leadership. There's a degree of scepticism around leadership typically. And trust, I believe, comes from a place of authenticity, honesty, and vulnerability. And if as leaders, whether it's in the public sector or the private sector, you engage with your customer base, you engage with your internal colleagues in those ways, you're off in the right direction in terms of creating trust. And then to the point Kate, that you raised at the beginning and even the theme of some of the questions that we've asked, there's always a degree of risk and what if when it comes to AI.

And when we think about fairness and bias and fraud and things like that, if we can change our mindset as leaders to how do we embrace it to reduce fraud, protect fraud, protect us against fraud, how do we use it to make a better experience for our citizens or for our consumers? How do we create a fairer environment for our workplace? That puts a slightly different lens to the debate and starts people thinking about the opportunities in a way that maybe doesn't discount the risks but is more forward looking as opposed to holding us back.

KATE DRIVER: And Corryn, you've spoke about the experience within KPMG, where you had to really work on people's mindsets, and the culture that underpinned the use of the tools. Do you want to speak a little bit more to that?

CORRYN WEBB: Absolutely. I think also, coming back to scepticism, I am a big believer that some of your biggest sceptics, if you can persuade them into using new tools or new technology, they can also be your biggest and best advocates and change enablers. So, if you get them on the right side and gain their buy-in, they're going to help you to get the message out and to be able to adopt those tools in the best way possible. So, in terms of, I guess some of the ways that we do adoption is by making sure that you've got. And I talk about focus groups because focus groups, to me, is across selection of your key stakeholders across various networks. So, in KPMG we made sure that we had people from across all our teams, so all our service lines, across all the sectors. So that way we had coverage from, I guess, every perspective, different age groups, all sorts of obviously diverse backgrounds as well.

One of the things that we did use was use cases, so using personal experience to be able to share that as a use case, and that helped to gain more adoption, because people were seeing other ways in which people were using that technology and the benefit that it created for them. So being able to plug those benefits and being able to share those stories, was a unique way that we were able to also increase adoption. For one of our people, English was their second language, and they had had feedback about their spelling and about their grammar. So, they used an AI tool to be able to help them to communicate better. And from that it gave them more confidence. It empowered them to be able to send out more emails, communicate better. It also increased their productivity and efficiency. And I guess, again, another example of the way that helps people and grows.

KATE DRIVER: I can see that applying in a lot of different contexts. My mind goes to conversations we've had about neuro divergent staff and a neuro diverse workforce, which, for all its creativity and different ways of seeing the world, different ways of brains working, adds a real richness. But sometimes there are real intangible barriers for people trying to get across what they mean, where there may be some loss in translation, particularly as a person who's not neuro typical, being able to articulate it in a way that really lands. It may be a valuable tool. It might also reinforce bias. And there's

some interesting work that's been done by Tracy Spicer here in Australia on some of the inherent biases that are baked into some of the platforms that AI operates on. And so having that healthy scepticism is an important part of the human element of AI. So, thank you for your question. It certainly prompted some discussion. I think I see a hand up at the back of the room there.

SPEAKER 8: Yeah, it's probably a little bit more of a technical question. We've talked a lot about trust, bias, fairness in these AI systems. To date, we're talking about AI, we're talking about generative AI, large language models. To date, there's probably only about five companies in the world that can build these models. I was just wondering, do the panel think that we're introducing... How do I say the word? Systemic risk into the ways of working when we're relying on AI models that are produced by just five companies?

KATE DRIVER: Great question. We might run down the panel. But we might start in the middle so that I don't make James and Shane the first or the last word each time. So, Christina, how about we go with you?

CHRISTINA GRAVES: That's a tricky question, given it's a technical question.

KATE DRIVER: Maybe you could speak about some of the principles around monopolies and duopoly, and what we've learned from some of the precedents in that area of law.

CHRISTINA GRAVES: Yes, it does present challenges in that there's, I guess, having limited choice in terms of providers that provide certain AI tools and where they're getting their data from. It does raise, I guess, some challenges in terms of being able to make... Having a greater choice and making decisions from a privacy perspective that, I guess, yes... Sorry, I'm not answering this question very well. Having limited choice can present, I guess, some barriers in terms of the outcomes that you're trying to... I'm sorry, I'm my train of thought.

KATE DRIVER: Well, maybe I might bounce off that around a recent lived example around a single platform that we were all driven to in the early, early days of lockdown in 2020. Suddenly Zoom became the place to go. And I don't know if you saw the story circulating at the time, but there was a conversation between two colleagues, and

one of those colleagues was a person of colour, and he said to his colleague, "So how do you make the Zoom backgrounds work?" And she was trying to show him, she shared a screen and he said, "Yeah, yeah, but how do you stop it erasing your face?" And she said, "I don't know what you mean." And he showed her, and his face disappeared every time he put a background on. It came out that the team behind the design of Zoom, moving at a rapid pace in the middle of the world sliding sideways and on fire, were all white men and had tested the backgrounds on their own faces.

And so, the inherent bias in this very nifty little thing that they wanted to roll out to enhance the Zoom experience about six weeks into lockdown, reflected one of those scenarios. Where were the other people in the room who were not white men? And I don't mean to vilify white men, but to say that a diversity of thought, both whether we're speaking about a monopoly or duopoly in the market or five companies, just points to the risk that we bake in biases that we're just unconscious to. That's the nature of unconscious bias. But Shane, do you have thoughts on that one?

SHANE LITTLE: Yeah, firstly, I think it's an incredibly difficult question, Christina, and I think it's a philosophical question, not a technical question. I don't pretend to understand large language models or will ever have the capability probably to work in one of those five organisations, but do I think having such power in a small number of behemoths is the right thing for us as a world and society? My own view is no, it's a little bit, do I think the world's richest man having control of one of the biggest media outlets or tools for producing and pushing media to us as a society? No, I don't. But the technical elements of it, I won't pretend to understand.

KATE DRIVER: James, you're more technical than I think anyone on this stage. What are your thoughts?

JAMES ROBERTS: It's insulting to the rest of the panel. It's my first thought. I think there might be a degree of self-regulation in it. I hear you, because there will be that kind of coalescence around those ones. Capitalist society where there's money made, I think there will be other entrants into that market because people follow the money, sadly or not sadly, depending on your personal perspective on capitalism. It will be hard though on the

rate that they can increase and the costs that I've heard of some of these models that they're creating, where they're literally talking about throwing billions at them to develop them as to whether any other entities can catch up.

One of the things that clipped into the discussion that we had in our session was also where does quantum play a role in this? Because part of the restriction is a compute restriction, that they have some of the bigger environments to do that level of compute. If quantum is more unilaterally available to collection of companies, but also governments, that is the factor that we provide more levelling of that landscape. It is a cool question and thought about it.

KATE DRIVER: Corryn, you've had the most time of all to have a think about this one. Any words of wisdom?

CORRYN WEBB: I like that there is going to be more players joining the market. Because I do. That is the potential, obviously large language model is one thing, but when you're thinking about smaller tools, generative AI tools, they're going to keep popping up. There is going to be a lot more of those that pop up. There is a whole bunch that we use within our organisation, and that's going to continue to happen in different areas of AI.

KATE DRIVER: Thanks for the question. That was a curly one. The man in the Pac-Man suit, Andrew, please if you haven't seen Andrew's suit, you should find him during networking and ask him about it.

JAMES ROBERTS: You're not going to miss him, to be fair.

KATE DRIVER: Andrew, please.

SPEAKER 9: Thanks so much. Is this on? Yeah. Beautiful APS Data professional stream strategy says that every APS employee should have at least a foundational level of data literacy. And I think advent of ChatGPT, and other forms of AI is demonstrating why that's the case. But there's a lot of people that I think that are sceptical about data. We see Google AI come out with Eat one rock a day, a geologist said so, or something like that. There was a conversation article about it. How do we, as leaders, cultivate a culture in our organisations where people want to be data literate? Because it's one thing to have everyone should have foundational data

literacy in a strategy, it's another thing to cultivate a culture where that becomes a reality.

KATE DRIVER: Great question. Corryn. You picked up your microphone quite quickly.

CORRYN WEBB: I did. I got excited by that. Culture. Culture. People. People. That's my thing. Not tech. So, for us, we do a lot of different things. So, we call it our intervention library, and what we do is we have basically a whole library of interventions which help people to overcome adoption barriers. So, some of those things, and I did have my three key points, and some of them are on here, so bear with me while I refer to those. But one of them is giving them a safe space to experiment. So, leaders providing an area where they can play in a sandbox and play on the tools, and it's going to give them that area where they can experiment themselves and explore what it is. Also, just in terms of data literacy, I think that especially with every technology that we used, you need to be able to have time on it to work out whether it's for you, whether it's not for you.

And people learn at different speeds. So being able to provide different education programs at different levels is something, you're going to get people that are more advanced, and you're going to get people that are at beginner level, and then you're going to have people that are super passionate about it, but they still don't have a clue. You want all those people to be able to have different opportunities. One of the things that we talked about was providing education sessions, different times of the day, and different days of the week. So, making sure that you're providing opportunity for people to be able to attend. Gamify things. So do little competitions. People say they're not competitive, but it's amazing how many people say they're not competitive and then they want the award at the end or the reward at the end.

KATE DRIVER: And they're so happy about it too when they do.

CORRYN WEBB: They are. Give a person a certificate, they'll stand there, and they'll take a photo with you. So just do some fun things. So, make it fun and make it available to people at all different levels. And that's why again, coming back to focus groups and stakeholders, just making sure that you're engaging with them. Ask them what they want, ask them what would make them happy to be able to use this new tool. Give them use cases. Give them examples of what it is that they're using and why. And then they'll be able to run with them.

SHANE LITTLE: I won't add anything to that from a cultural perspective because I think Corryn's absolutely nailed it, but within the APS you probably have a pretty good understanding and defined benchmark of what is foundational data capability. Within the private sector, I don't think that exists in such a consistently understood way. And from a talent acquisition perspective, if you, as an organisation, don't understand exactly what that means, how can you measure for it? How can you recruit against it? And then how can you put development and learning journeys in place to help people get there? So, I think getting that consistency of understanding in any organisation, whether it's the APS or private sector business, is really, important.

KATE DRIVER: Thanks for the question. Any other thoughts across the room? Questions? We've got one down the front here. While the microphone's coming down here, I might ask a question myself, which is... So, I've learned a few things today and I was probably the healthy sceptic in terms of AI. I've now learned that I probably don't need to take minutes again. As I was halfway through typing up notes from our session, I had a realisation of, "Oh, I could use AI to do this." I think my life has been changed by the revelation that AI can fix my inbox, which I'm very excited about. And so, a question on notice for the panel is, what are those one or two things that were those breakthrough moments for each of you in this space? And I'll let you cogitate on that one while we go to the question from the floor.

SPEAKER 10: I guess generative AI has really captured the public imagination, and organisations are very curious and excited about the possibilities, even if they haven't yet identified problems to solve specifically. I'm interested in your views on how the APS can make the most of

the wave of enthusiasm while balancing it against the risks? And particularly noting, I guess, that IT projects can be notoriously difficult to deliver.

JAMES ROBERTS: I'll give it a whirl. It won't be a good answer, but it'll be an answer as well. Buying you all thinking time. I'll just say.

CORRYN WEBB: Thank you, James.

JAMES ROBERTS: Yeah, I think there's probably different levels of maturity. So, if I look at times when I've fallen on my face spectacularly internally, it's when I probably didn't have a good foundation. So, if a particular system or project or something that you're working on is delivering absolute foundational capability, and we're already talking because it's popular, it's cliched, it's out there, et cetera, about large language models and gen AI. That feels like it's the recipe for something going splat rather dramatically at some point. If I look at even the CBA fraud AI journey, it's super long, hey. It's 15 years of models and stuff like that.

Buying them to start with, and then gradually starting to build them, and only now talking about and starting to use some elementary gen AI ones. If I try to do the continuum hop from base model, absolute foundational, to then all the fancy stuff, I don't know, I think it could work, but my betting would be that it probably wouldn't. I think sometimes you must walk the path to understand it, and that helps you evade some of the risks that you're talking about, because you're like... You've done almost micro learning along the way, and that micro learning has added up to a good foundational knowledge base. So, I gave you more than enough time.

SHANE LITTLE: Thank you.

CORRYN WEBB: I'm happy to jump on. Thank you, James. So just in terms of, I guess, having discussions with SMEs, so subject matter experts within your business as well, especially people that are passionate about AI or generative AI or whatever it might be, the tools that you're interested in implementing, and bringing those people together to form a little community. Business cases obviously do have traction within APS, and I think it's obviously making sure that you've followed obviously the processes in your department, but then

incorporating that feedback that you are receiving. As a community, you're going to have a bigger voice if it's more than just one person. So, working together to make that change together.

CHRISTINA GRAVES: Sure. So, to follow on from what Corryn was saying, I think there's a role for various levels. Having your AI champions within your organisation, then leaders in various areas, you can then encourage others to come up with ideas to identify things where they've got pain points in terms of what they're doing, objectives that they're trying to achieve. And then that can help in terms of collaboration on working on what are some of the use cases that we can leverage AI for. And then having that space to develop those use cases further, to test AI models and so on. And then to spread the word within the organisation, if you have one success case, that often leads to more success cases and more ideas.

SHANE LITTLE: I don't think I've got the answer, but I've got an opinion, and that is, the workforce of today, and the workforce of tomorrow, if you don't give them access to the tools because you don't understand the framework in which you can give them access to, they will use them anyway. They will find ways outside of your system, in their personal lives, they'll do it on their own devices, and then bring the outputs of that into your system and into your ecosystem anyway. We're certainly seeing that in our organisation where when ChatGPT became a thing, everyone with any sort of view towards being more effective in their role, in our business, started using it. And we turned it off six weeks later. They didn't stop using it. They're all using it in their mobile phones and in their iPads, and then they're bringing it into the system. So, it's a really difficult question to answer, and it's very strategic, but I think you've got to figure it out or else people will just use it anyway.

KATE DRIVER: That example really points to the lesson that I learned when I was at Questacon. One of my colleagues, Nat was sitting at the back of the room, I had a wonderful nearly nine years there, running the place, and we had a exhibition around robotics. So, it wasn't AI. Robotics is not AI. Algorithms are not AI, but it is an avatar for the discussion. And if you're really interested in avatars dropping into the uncanny valley, you should check out Drew's video from KPMG. Genevieve Bell does this

fantastic Boyer lecture around where the uncanny valley is in terms of technology, and where it's cool, fascinating, really, really, cool. I'm going to play with this. I'm going to explore. And then suddenly it starts to get a little creepy. And that might be where some of the avatars are might land us. But in this Questacon exhibition, which was targeted at families and primary school children, one of the big takeaways I learned was we had this fantastic exhibit there, but the thing that I found fascinating was a very simple exhibit that was a big red button.

And if you've ever been inside Questacon, you know that if there's a big red button, it must be pushed. And so, the exhibit said, "Do not press this button." Anyone want to hazard a guess what percentage of visitors press the button? 99. Did people think maybe we're better rule followers in Canberra? You're right, it was somewhere between 93 and 98% daily. So, humans will make choices regardless of the parameters. And while I'm getting my panellists ready for the "What was your breakthrough moment in AI?" And last word, I just want to leave you with what we were trying to achieve through this conversation. We don't want to forget the people and the humans in these challenges that feel beyond human scale. We serve a community of people.

And so, ladies, gentlemen, friends beyond the binary, and fellow human actors, have a think about what the humanness means for you in terms of the implementation, the culture, the context. We deliberately steered away from a tech summit. We deliberately steered away from showcasing tools. There are plenty of those around to be explored, but it's the human element and the services that we provide that really encourage us to think about what we do as a public sector in serving our community in these very, very challenging times. So, you've had fair warning panel, and I will leave James to a last thing as he so generously bought time for the rest of the panel. And I'll start here with Shane. So, what was your one moment where you went, "Oh, Got it."

SHANE LITTLE: There's been a number, but I think if I was to pick one, it was probably December of last year. As a leader of our business, up until that point I was probably leaving the drive on AI to others within the organisation, and maybe not at the right level, and not trusting in my own

sense of adventure and curiosity. And in December of last year, school holidays arrived, and my 14-year-old son wrote his resume in 13 seconds using ChatGPT, and then began to customise it. And I went, "Wow, that's fantastic. That's what all the guys and girls in our business are doing. How does it work?" And he said, "Dad, you better get with this." And I sat back and went, "He's right." Because he's already at an age where he is far more fluent and comfortable in engaging with a tool that is not even the most advanced of those that are out there. And I had probably sat a little bit on the sidelines and expected others in our organisation to lead the drive with that. And that was a bit of a wake-up moment for me.

CHRISTINA GRAVES: I think for me it was just learning some trust or self-trust in utilising AI. So, for example, with ChatGPT, I certainly had a lot of scepticism about what it could produce and how it could be used. And it was through experimentation, seeing what it could be produce, and just understanding that it's not the final answer, it's not necessarily the correct answer, but it can provide a good starting point that I can then leverage off to do the work that I want to do, and save an incredible amount of time in terms of research. So that was a bit of a breakthrough moment for me in terms of learning to trust the AI and trust myself in using it.

KATE DRIVER: Does it feel like a million years ago where you had to go to the Commonwealth Law Journals in the library and open Volume 73, page 172 to find the words of the judge? Those kinds of time saving endeavours make a difference.

CHRISTINA GRAVES: I'm glad I can still remember those days. I was talking to a grad recently about having to look up things on microfiche and they're like, "What's microfiche?"

KATE DRIVER: There are a few researchers in the room I'm sure really appreciate that reference. Corryn?

CORRYN WEBB: I have a few. I'll be quick. So, Dean showed, in the masterclass, do you remember the Clippy that used to be on the Word documents?

KATE DRIVER: He's coming back.

CORRYN WEBB: I know. Clippy is back. But Clippy is advanced and so much better. I remember Clippy used to annoy me, but also, I loved Clippy. It was this love hate relationship and I feel like that's also still valid. The other thing is when I was doing the Synaesthesia videos last night, my children were around, I have a 9-year-old and a 7-year-old. My kids looked at the video and they went, "That's AI." And I went, "What?" I didn't even know that they knew what AI was, a 9-year-old and a 7-year-old. Obviously, my children are far smarter than I give them credit for. It's due to their mother. But also, then the final thing is personal bias in prompts. So, for me, I just watch what I put in as a prompt. It's something that I remind myself and making sure that the prompts that I'm putting in have removed, as much as I can, bias. So, it's then generating the content that I need that's going to be applicable to greater audiences.

KATE DRIVER: Thank you. James?

JAMES ROBERTS: Despite all the time made available to me, I don't have the great answer again.

CORRYN WEBB: I tried.

JAMES ROBERTS: I know you really did try. I think it's one of those things, I don't know if you've had it before, where you've got a team of people and a bunch of people that report to you and stuff like that, and you're flogging the dead horse trying to sell them some concept, and you can see that no one's buying and you're like still trying. The horse has been dead for a few hours, but you're still whipping. And then you could see some glimmers of hope, and then you found yourself excluded from something. Then you got some arbitrary update message, and you suddenly realise, bloody hell, they've taken it and run themselves. And they had far better ideas than I would have ever had in terms of what to go after first. And that was quite heartwarming because our works at a superhuman level, you get the opportunity to save people for some really shit outcomes type thing. So, to see them see it as something legitimately that they can put a new generation beyond what we've got already in our toy kit, if you like, type thing. That was kind of cool.

KATE DRIVER: What a perfect note to end on. People with passion and purpose, which you wouldn't say much about computers if you weren't in the ICT team, are seeing things like this as a tool to advance something that they care about, I think is a brilliant note to end our panel session on. We want to thank the Portrait Gallery for their support for this initiative. We are deliberately choosing this building as an avatar for the conversation. We will be hearing from the assistant minister to the Prime Minister, and assistant minister for the public sector to wrap up today's events.

KATHERINE JONES PSM: Thanks very much for joining us here this evening after, what I understand, has been a fantastic day. I'm Catherine Jones. I'm the secretary of the Attorney General's Department and the president of IPAA ACT. It's my honour, today, to be able to make the introductions of the minister, and I'll do that shortly. I just did want to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet here in the ACT, the Ngunnawal people, but also acknowledge other families, communities, and individuals with a connection to our beautiful country here. I'd like to acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are here today. So, I think the fact that there are so many of you still here, you've been here all day, engaging on the topic of AI, just confirms what we all know, which is it's an issue that we're going to have to grapple with, with every part of how we do our work in the public service.

It's not something that's just a digital issue or an IT issue. It's something that can enable us. It's something that can support better service delivery, better decision making, but it also comes with a lot of challenges and issues for us to work through in terms of appropriate use of AI across the public sector. So, I think having the opportunity to discuss that, start the conversation across the board, but in our own organisations, is critical. So, I applaud you all for investing the time through today to be here. So, as I said, it's my honour to introduce the honourable Patrick Gorman, who is the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, and Assistant Minister for the Public Service. The minister has been in the parliament since 2018, and half an hour ago was standing up in the house shepherding through a significant piece of legislation around net-zero through the Parliament.

So, he's come straight from the chamber here, which is fantastic. During the minister's recent work on the APS State of the Service and APS census, he spoke to APS staff across the country about their views on skills, and what they saw as the capabilities to allow them to do their job well. I think we did a little bit of research, and we noted that you're a social scientist and perhaps also came out of a family of teachers. So, we know that you're going to be incredibly interested and invested in discussing development of skills for how to navigate technology and AI, now and into the future. So please join me in welcoming the minister.

PATRICK GORMAN MP: Thank you very much, Katherine. I too acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people, the traditional owners of the land on which we gather tonight and which many of those in the room live. I want to acknowledge Katherine Jones PSM, secretary of the Attorney General's Department, IPAA ACT president, host of this evening's event. And just to note that you know you've got a strong relationship between a secretary and their minister, when I was sitting in a division 20 minutes ago, the Attorney General comes up to me and says, "You're going to be late for my secretary who's introducing you." So, I think that speaks to the close effective working relationships you have where the secretary has the Attorney General whipping me to make sure I'm on time.

I want to acknowledge Kate Driver as the IPAA ACT CEO and Bree Pickering as the director here at this wonderful National Portrait Gallery. Thank you for hosting us here this evening, Bree. I am so relieved, having rushed in, I'm so relieved that people have a drink or snack in their hand. I was terrified that I was going to get here and be the person standing between you and said drink or snack. So, I'm just relieved, really. Simple as that. And I'll start by just talking about this place, the National Portrait Gallery, which has, for many years, hosted many different forms of art. It has looked at how can we use digital forms of art. There's a wonderful digital installation, that's not on display now, that I really love, of Paul Kelly with his Vox amp over his shoulder. Great Australian. Done by great Australian artist in a new media form.

And I did a little bit of research. I was like, "Well, what's the link between artificial intelligence and the National Portrait Gallery?" And there was for Science Week 2023, held here just a few months ago, an artist and PhD candidate, Jess Harrington, hosted a session targeted for nine- to 13-year-olds, the artists or public servants of the future about brains first computers, trying to deeply engage young people in how we start to think about art and children or teenagers as creators. And she started her presentation by engaging the young people in the fact that there are, of course, limitations to artificial intelligence. And one of the ones when it comes to generative image is that AI can't draw hands. That is something that humans are good at, and AI is really, still struggling with. But also, she pointed out something much more fundamental, which, is that AI, or if you talk about generative AI, text-based or image-based or audio-visual based, it needs a human prompt.

It can't do anything without someone asking it to act. And I think that was a great point, that if we start to engage young people in that, and recognising that it's both art and technology, that those things don't sit opposed, but they sit together, but also that they sit together with humans still at the centre. And I'll go to the formal remarks. If anyone thinks that this speech is written by artificial intelligence or anything like that, let me assure you that it's not. But if it sounds like it is, it has been consulted on with 10 separate government agencies and departments. It's been through five ministers' offices. So, if you get the sense that maybe it's a little inhuman at times, that is by consultation, not by me refusing to do my homework. I'll start by telling you why I wanted to speak to you today.

It's because I know that the public sector does need to uplift our capability when it comes to artificial intelligence. And there is no other option. Ministers like me are seeing reports now delivered to government by advocacy groups where they've been developed in part by artificial intelligence. In my electorate office, I know that the letters I receive from constituents are now co-written by my newest constituents, ChatGPT and Gemini AI. For a little while there, last year I thought my constituents were getting far more articulate, but then I noticed they were getting far more American in their language too.

We're seeing artificial intelligence change our communities. It's helping and challenging small businesses. And for those of us who legislate or write legislation and policy, it's requiring us to have even more careful thinking. So, I believe this is a conversation that every parliamentarian, every public servant, indeed every Australian needs to be a part of. Let's jump back a little. It's the early 2000s, Silver chair's blasting out on the radio, the original four Wiggles are still together. You've just returned home from a flight landing at Brisbane airport. You're exhausted, jet-lagged, you get off the plane, you collect your luggage, and then you wait in the long line for passport checks. You watch, as manually, passport by passport, page by page, person by person, they are manually inspected by customs officers doing their absolute best to move these huge queues through. The journey through the airport is almost as arduous as the flight itself.

Fast-forward to the present, you can still listen to silver chair if you want to, but you can head toward the Smart Gates, 30 seconds, passport goes in and out, bang, you're straight out the airport doors. In no time, you're talking to that relative that you've roped in to pick you up. And you've just had much more human experience even though we're using more technology and more artificial intelligence to achieve that. So, if you think about the technological transformation over the last few decades, in the early 2000s, fewer than 7% of people globally had access to the internet.

You had to get your silver chair CDs from Sanity. Today, more than 65% of the world is online. Mobile phone subscriptions have gone from 740 million to eight billion. Yes, there's many mobile phones as there are people on earth. And with that change, where would you want to be, but Australia. We've always been an early adopter, if not a leader in technological advancement. We're proud of our advancements. You just need to say to an Australian Wi-Fi, Gardasil, Cochlear. And people instantly are proud of who we are and what we've contributed to the world. And now we're seeing that advancement move faster and faster and faster. Think about something that we now take for granted that's only 60 years old. The satellite technology that has transformed our country, particularly a vast distant country.

It has made such huge change. We now take for granted that we can check our weather apps on our phone, know when we need to bring the washing in, know when we're about to confront a last minute lane change on a freeway, or make sure that our agencies such as Geoscience Australia can use satellite imagery to monitor for changes in our landscape, preparing us for everything from bush fires, coastline movements to floods. And looking at how do we use that technology to further support important industries for Australia like our resources industry, and our agricultural industries. In this land of drought and flooding rains, and in a changing climate, this data has never been more important to access, and it's never been more urgent that we can process it in ways that give us new insights to take the right action at the right time.

Digitization has revolutionised so much of what we know and live as people and deliver as government services. If you think about Medicare, 40 years old this year. When Medicare starts, your experience of Medicare was going to a Medicare service office somewhere in the city, you'd queue up in your lunch break, you would eventually be handed your $5 note, your $2 coin, your $1 coin, and your 50-cent coin. And you'd walk out very happy with your $8.50. Now you don't even need a Medicare card. You can have your digital Medicare card on your phone. A huge transformation. We all remember the tax packs, we loved going and collecting them from the news agent, going through page after page after page. Now it's a web portal, that with a few clicks and answering a few simple questions, bang, you've done your tax return and hopefully paid all your taxes and insured the appropriate financing of government initiatives.

And even in the parliament, things have changed rapidly. Think that it was just 2006 that the Howard government introduced Blackberries into the public service. Just 2006. Mobile email now is an essential part of how government works, although it's probably easier to get a fax machine in your office than it is to get a Blackberry. And then, six years ago we had the addition of Microsoft Teams to our lives. And now we've got generative AI capturing the world's imagination. And that has created some urgent need within the public sector, and some apprehension. It's created a need for new guidance in the public sector and allowed

us to see a little glimpse of the future as to what AI can give for routine tasks like allowing public servants deliver more services and more policy to better support Australians. In other words, this is another race, and the Australian Public Service can either lead as a policy innovator or fall behind.

So far, we're leading, we lead the charge, becoming one of the first governments in the world to adopt an ethical AI framework for government way back in 2019. Within months of ChatGPT-4 being released, the government began consulting on translating principles into mandatory guardrails. We've got a whole of government task force that's been created, and we're engaging closely with our partners around the world, where they are also taking decisive action. We've seen the United States, the White House is taking steps to ensure AI is safe to use. Joe Biden's issued an executive order directing government agencies to follow a whole of government approach to the safe and responsible use of AI. We've got the United Kingdom releasing a white paper in 2023 titled A Pro Innovation Approach to AI Regulation. And it was the UK that hosted the first international AI Safety Summit at the iconic Bletchley Park.

Here in our region, in the Asia Pacific, we've got Singapore's government releasing a national AI strategy in December of last year. They're working through... And this is just one example, and if I think about one of the things, I was in Singapore last year and they have really embraced the idea they need to let public servants engage. They are one of the first to have a 2000 public servant trial across every agency, and they're already starting to see results. They've got the Singapore General Hospital now who's running a dementia trial using AI called Project Pensieve. What that means is that people where they're looking to diagnose dementia, go in, do a five-minute drawing, the results are available immediately, and they can analyse what is happening in the brain of that individual to make sure their dementia screening is much more broad and much more proactive. And here it's not just government that's facing this challenge.

We've got major Australian companies, Canva, News Corp, Atlassian, all accelerating their AI products. And just last week the financial review hosted its own AI summit. So, in simple terms, Australia can't afford to be left behind, and we've got to keep inserting ourselves into this global race. This is the next chapter of technological advancement for our society. And I'm determined to make sure that our public servants seek out the massive benefits of AI and use it in a safe and transparent way. That's why the Australian government has committed some $39.9 million over five years to support the adoption and use of AI safely and responsibly. And just last week our government announced four new AI adopt projects, enabling Australian small to medium businesses to have access to expert advice on how to safely adopt artificial intelligence in their operations, and the four AI adopt centres, under the $17 million AI program, which will act as a front door to connect business with AI expertise. That was written by a human, allegedly. And we also want to make sure that people see that government is embracing this.

I don't want people to think that when you join the public service you are walking back in time to the early 2000s in terms of the ICT systems available to you. I don't want people to think when they join the public service that they don't have access to people who are keen to learn, keen to experiment in safe and measured ways, but keen to also make sure that we invest in the skills and capabilities of our people to unleash the full potential of this great technology. One of the things I have responsibility for is the Australian Public Service Academy, and I'm determined to make sure it plays a serious role in up skilling our public service, and indeed sharing those experiences of up skilling our public service with other organisations, other community organisations, other industry organisations. Because we really do have to build... We are seeking to build the training, and I don't want us to get to a point where we're just buying an off the shelf AI training product from some other provider.

Only the Australian government will know how we best train our people for the work that we need to do. And that's one of the things that I've been having several conversations within government about. Because if we get that wrong, we really will, we really will see

ourselves fall behind. And I'm just going to go through some of the areas where we can already learn from one another. One of the things is that this does come with a level of apprehension, but it also comes with a bunch of people are doing incredible work who probably would be never happier than to receive a phone call saying, "I hear you're doing something really impressive using technology, using artificial intelligence in the public sector within all of the guidelines that we've put together. How can I steal some of that for my agency? How can I steal some of that from my department? How did you get through the roadblocks?"

So, look at the examples. The Australian Tax Office, one of, I would note, one of the most trusted institutions in the Australian government using intelligence to the right staff at the right time to ensure they focus on the highest tax risks, enabling them to focus on activities that require human decision making, human interactions, human empathy. So, what they do is they build AI analytical models to help identify taxpayer populations and identify for further review. It reduces the likelihood that the ATO will unnecessarily be reviewing taxpayers who are compliant and ensure that they are also able to use AI when it comes to entitlement calculation, expanding into natural language processing. And that's all about giving a more personalised service. Sometimes people think about AI, about being less personalised, less human. Again, huge kudos to the tax office that what they are seeking to do is to create more human experiences using artificial intelligence.

If you look at what the Australian Bureau of Statistics about to do, they've been able to deal with the backlog. They have this massive data set, which I had not heard about until I started researching for this speech. I'm sure there's some people who have heard about this data set, but they've got something called the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations. Hasn't been updated since 2006. As a result of using artificial intelligence, it has been updated. A huge achievement. If you look at what the Australian Signals Directorates Project Red Spice is doing, they're looking at using, through ASD, AI in intelligence and cyber capability to make sure that Australia keeps pace with the very best of information gathering and intelligence monitoring. And some of you

hopefully are on the Microsoft Copilot trial for Microsoft 365. Is anyone on the trial? That's good. That's very encouraging. Did anyone try to get on the trial and not get on the trial?

Me and you. Yeah. That was a dispiriting experience. But I'm keen to learn from those who have been given the permission to be on the trial, because obviously this is about figuring out how do we make sure that these tools, that are about to sit on our desktops, some of them are there, some of them, the only reason they're not there is because they've been turned off by the ICT teams. We want to make sure that we get these tools right, we can use them in a way that enables people to do more efficient work, more deep thinking, more of those things that only humans can do. And it's an exciting trial. One of the things we know is that, for those agencies that have participated, they'll be required to provide data and insights for the digital transformation agency to inform the final evaluation report.

Again, putting Australia at the leading edge of deploying generative AI tools across government. And again, the digital transformation agency in partnership with AI Task Force will evaluate that trial, and government is looking forward to their advice on next steps of broader rollout. Because AI is at its best when it supports the work of our public servants to serve Australia in the important work they do. Building APS wide capability in a completely new way, balancing innovation and risk, but also making sure that we learn and apply the lessons of the past. And on that, I just do want to note that the recent Robodebt scandal did tell us that automated decision making isn't everything. It taught us that when we are making decisions about people's lives, and using that vast power of government, we can't take humans completely out of the equation. In fact, it reminded us that at every step, human consideration is the most important factor when it comes to designing good policy and doing good work as a public service.

And so, we're keen to strike that balance. We are keen to put people and business at the centre of government and decisions that we make while harnessing the power of technology. And I think we can do that. I believe we can. We must. And it's against that

backdrop that I'm genuinely optimistic about what the people in this room, the people in the public service, both commonwealth, state and local, where we are all having to learn from one another, and those who work alongside the public sector, I'm completely optimistic about what we can achieve using these new and emerging tools. Today, we don't think much about facial recognition as we pass through the Smart Gates in an airport. It is no longer a novelty. It's completely normal, but it makes all our lives easier. We use AI to streamline passport review, and now from humble beginnings, 81% of Australians passing through our airports use that Smart Gate technology.

165 million travellers, in total, each year use that Smart Gate technology coming in and out of Australia, and it frees up our border force officers to deliver better services to travellers, more human interaction, more assistance for those who need it, and less frustration for those who don't. Because this is about how we recognise that technology can complement humans, not replace them. What was once science fiction has now become a regular part of our daily lives. And we find the right balance, AI can similarly benefit our society and its people. I really want to congratulate you for taking time out of your busy schedules to have this conversation. I hope that in the days, weeks, months and years ahead, you recognise that you were a leader in making sure that we did this complex thing well, which is to use these incredible technologies in new and innovative ways to deliver policy and services that benefit the Australian people. Thank you very much for being here tonight, and I look forward to a chat informally. Thank you.

BREE PICKERING: Thank you, minister. And thank you Katherine and Kate for bringing us all together this morning... Huh, this morning. It's been a long day. This evening. I am Bree Pickering, the director of the National Portrait Gallery. And Minister Gorman, I just wanted to say I loved how generationally agnostic your references were. We had Blackberries, we had fax machines, we had ChatGPT, we had silver chair, but I think it's important to understand that as we move into this new technologically advanced space, that we don't want to leave anybody behind, and making sure that all our experiences are intergenerational is just so important. And one of the tools that we can use to do this, I would

argue, is creativity, and analogue experiences like coming to an art gallery, really brings people together across generations. So don't forget about us and don't leave the old people behind.

Anyway. So, I took on the role of director almost a year ago, and I have to say it's an enormous privilege to lead one of Australia's national cultural institutions here on Ngunnawal Country. The Portrait Gallery is the only cultural institution in Australia with the express mandate to share the evolution of Australian identity through art. And through portraiture, the gallery encourages conversation about who we are, where we've come from, and who we want to be as a nation. It endeavours to look honestly at Australian identity in all its brilliance and in all its messiness, and importantly to be the Portrait Gallery Australia needs now. Reading our past through the present. The gallery cares for a growing collection of over 3,200 artworks and welcomes an intergenerational audience of over 350,000 people annually to this beautiful building. And then beyond this city, the gallery shares its work at partner galleries, libraries, and museums across suburban, regional and remote Australia.

And last year we presented programs in or two people in every electorate across this country. And for those who can't visit in person, almost all the national collection of portraits is available online. And our digital and on-demand programs continue to expand accessibility. We are watching very closely as the fourth industrial revolution gathers pace. I didn't know that is what it was called. That's my AI knowledge of where we're at. But what is so important is that we understand here, that currently, human creativity is more important than ever. And we're so excited about the many ways AI can help the gallery, including increasing connection with our audiences in person and online. We're also interested in the role that visual art can play in meaning making and in advancing critical thinking when it comes to reading images. And this is very important for young people. We're also very finely attuned to how copyright and image ownership will need to be balanced in the of art through technology. So here, at the National Portrait Gallery, our service to the has strong alignment with IPAAs.

Our role is to reflect our changing identity back to us, and to inspire understanding that creativity belongs to everyone. Within the extraordinarily dynamic national cultural ecosystem that Australia has, the gallery's work strengthens understanding of who we are. And we really see IPAA's work and the APS's work as so important to all the work that we do here. We're very lucky to see how much joy our work brings immediately to people in the gallery, whether that be the pride on the face of the young artist whose work you will have seen earlier, or just the simple joy that people get when they tell us how much they hate an artwork, or a certain person that we've got on the wall. But we know that a lot of our colleagues in the APS don't get the immediate impact of their work every day. And I do want to take this moment just to thank you, because the work that we do and the work that the people in our portraits do, and the work that the artists do who made those portraits is all serviced by the incredible work that our Australian public service does.

So, thank you. We're absolutely thrilled to be working with IPAA to use the collection of portraits to connect APS staff, graduates, and trainees with their place in the national story. I really hope you enjoyed the galleries this evening. I hope you'll come back. We're working on building a reputation as the go-to place for school holiday programs, and this July, as many other places probably are, we're celebrating the Olympics. So, if you have young ones or old ones, we'll have an incredible exhibition of Olympians over time, and a fun hands-on activity where you can make a version of yourself and put yourself on the stage in Paris, which will be very exciting. So, if you are a member with IPAA, thank you for your continued engagement. The Portrait Gallery is home to many IPAA events this year. And I might just take this moment to ask you to all join me in thanking Minister Gorman. Thank you so much, minister. And I'd also like to thank Katherine and the team for bringing IPAA and the Portrait Gallery together. I look forward to seeing you all again soon. Thank you, Katherine.

KATHERINE JONES PSM: Thanks very much, Bree, and thanks for drawing out all the great connections with the Portrait Gallery. I have observed, I think I've spent days and weeks in this institution over the years at various events, and it's always fantastic. I'm just here to close things up. I would like to join Bree in thanking the minister. You've had a fantastic call of encouragement from the Minister for Public Service about how to use AI to explore the potential, to apply it to better the work that we do for the Australian people. So, I'm going to ask all of you, go back into your organisations tomorrow, talk about it with your colleagues, talk about it with your secretary, your deputy secretary, about what the minister said tonight, what you've discussed here today, and how you can put it at the forefront of everything that you're doing within your own organisations.

So once again, thanks to the Portrait Gallery. I'd also really like to thank IPAA's tier one partners. If you've been standing on this side of the room, you've been watching them displayed up on that wall, KPMG, Hays Recruitment, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, and Minster Ellison. In an AI world, we hope that you're all online, and I'm sure you are, you can use the hashtag for LinkedIn, #ipaaevents, if you want to follow up. To all the speakers and the panel members and everyone who's contributed to the event today, and if I can just do a particular shout out to the fantastic IPAA team. So much work goes behind pulling an event like this together, and they do a fantastic job on the smell of an oily rag. So, if you can all join me in thanking the team.