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HR Highlights Series.

**How AI will transform workplace safety, people
and culture, and the skills professionals will
need to survive this transformation**

Adam Foster, Cormack Dunn & Matthew Giles
5 November 2025



Predictions about technology, that were wrong...

“There’s no reason anyone would want a computer in their home.”

Ken Olsen, founder of Digital Equipment Corporation (1977) - pioneer of the micro-computer



“The iPhone will fail.”

Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO (2007)



“The internet will catastrophically collapse in 1996.”

Robert Metcalfe, inventor of Ethernet



Predictions about technology, that were nearly right...

“Google Glass will change everything.”

Google (2013)



“Segway will revolutionize personal transport - cities will be redesigned around Segways”.

Inventor of Segway, Dean Kamen (2001)



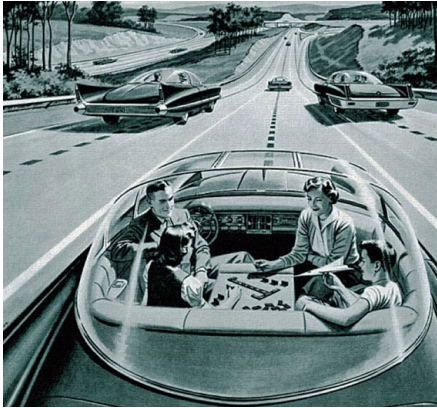
“Blockchain will eliminate banks.”



Predictions about technology, that were right...

Self-Driving Cars

Predicted in 1939 - GM's "Futurama" exhibit



Smartwatches

Predicted in 1946 - *Dick Tracy* comic strip



Tablet Computers

Predicted in 1968 - *2001: A Space Odyssey* featured "Newspads"

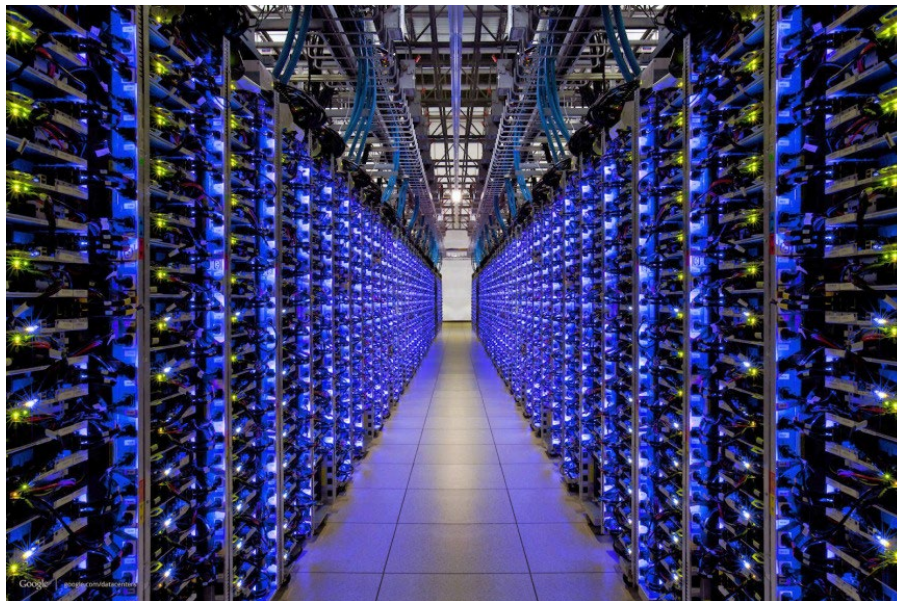


What do we think about this prediction?

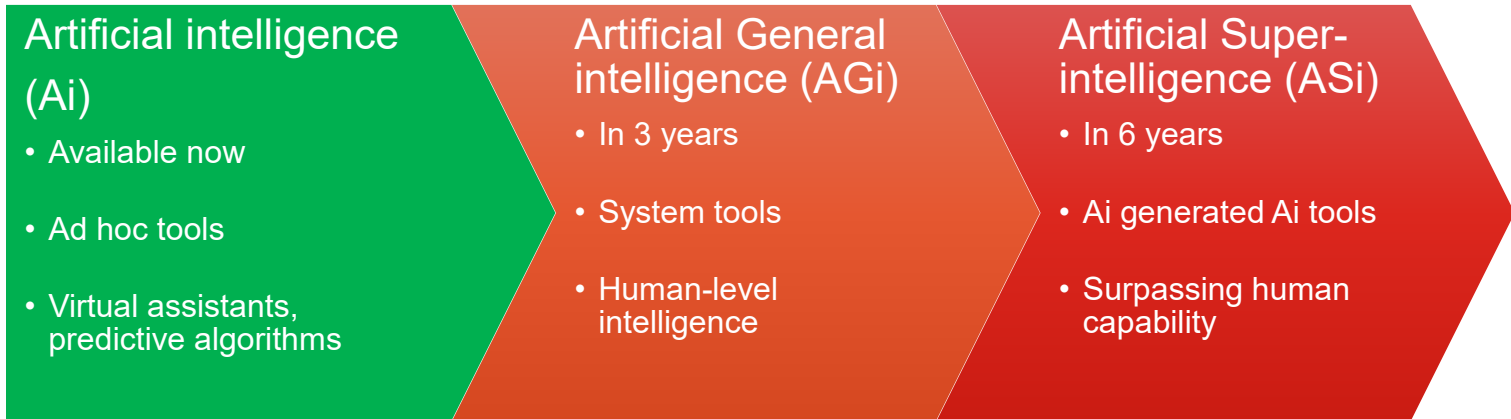
“Ai will cause 99% job loss by 2030”

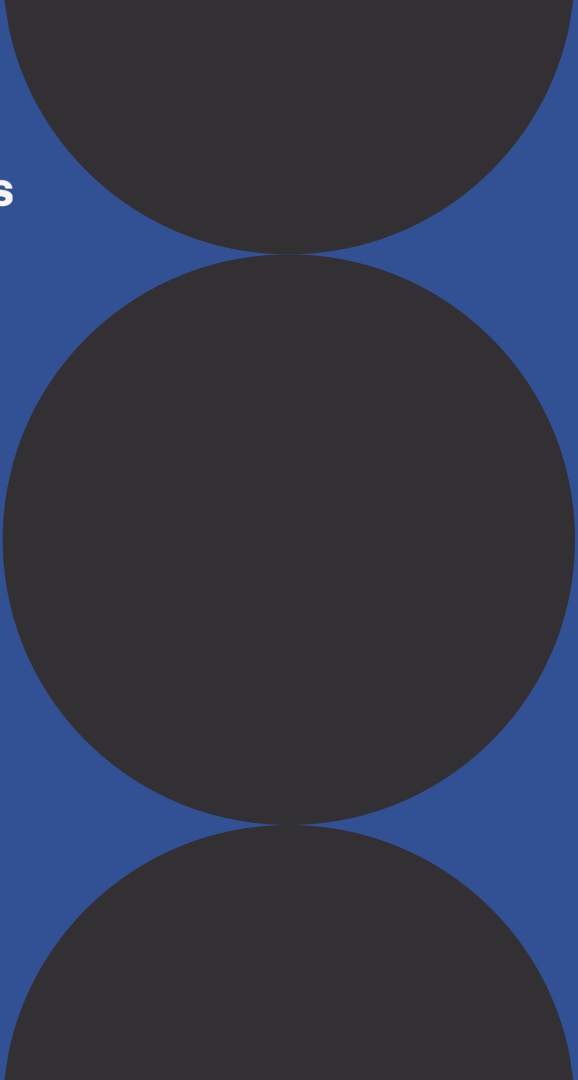
Dr. Roman Yampolskiy

AI safety expert and professor of
computer science



The predicted Ai journey...





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More than just systems and processes

**How AI will change the role of HR
professionals**

From compliance to strategic business partners

AI will take over more of the process work and HR professionals will be freed up to focus more on strategy:

1. Leading AI initiatives;
2. Interpreting and utilising AI-generated data to support decision making processes
3. Integrating initiatives and data into tasks that were process driven (i.e. recruitment, investigations, complaints management).
4. Influencing organisational behaviour and culture.



Future AI initiatives

Recruitment process

AI-powered recruitment processes will allow you to identify and capture candidate data and speed up selection process.

Tools such as HireVue can provide analysis of interview data.

Platforms such as HiBob provide administrative automation

Predictive analytics

AI analyses workers compensation data. This allows organisations to proactively identify and manage potential future claims by managing specific issues (human).

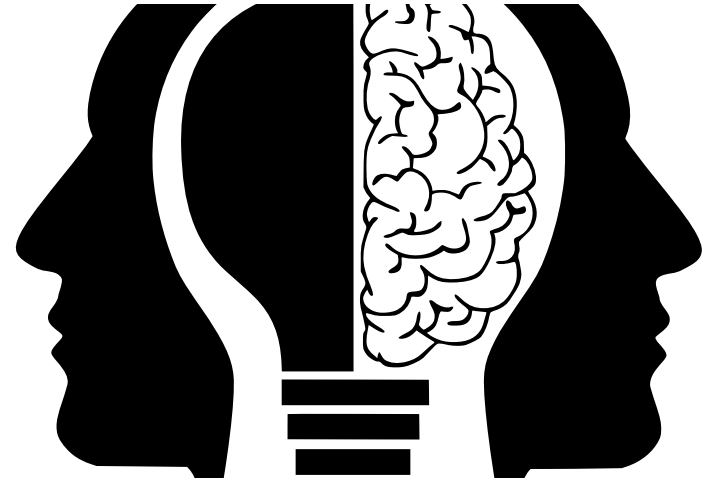
Automation

AI tools will automatically generate executive summaries, reminders (such as employee anniversaries) or reminders to deal with casual conversion requests, annualised salary reviews and flexible work arrangement deadlines.

Generating and applying AI-generated data

How might AI be generated and used?

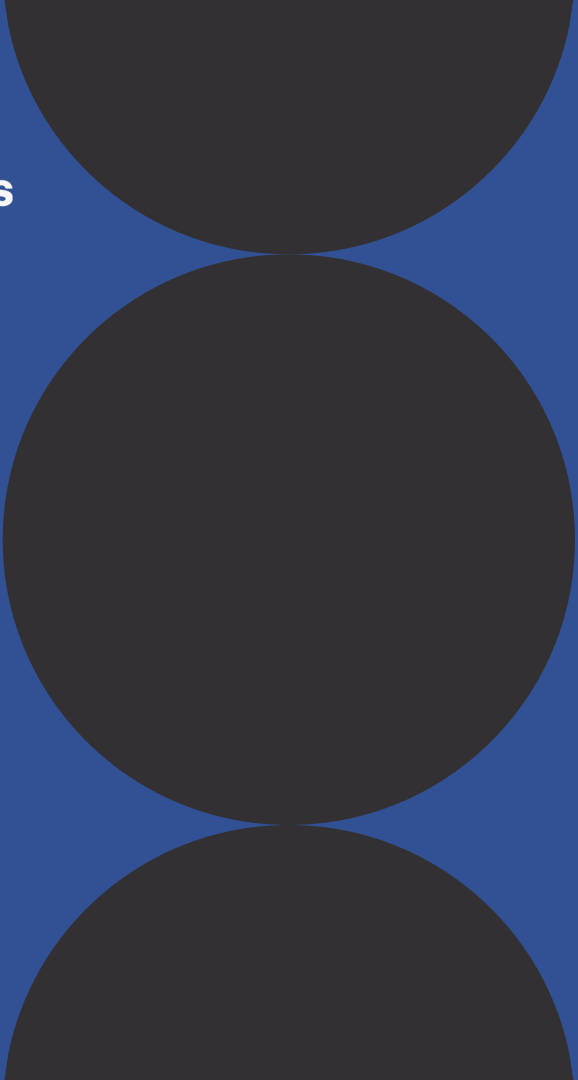
1. Data is generated by the AI systems
 - Example: candidate information and rating of candidates
2. Data is used to monitor and enforce legal obligations
 - Example: Automated reminders to manage statutory time periods
3. Data is used to set people and culture strategy
 - Example: Allows to focus on areas of improvement across workplace culture by access to more accurate data



Augmentation, not replacement

1. AI is not replacing HR professionals.
2. It will, however, **augment** their capabilities through:
 - automation of routine tasks (e.g., audits, data entry)
 - freeing professionals to focus on strategy and directly human aspects of role
3. This will require HR professionals to supplement their knowledge with understanding available AI tools and how to use them and how they can pivot into other areas.
4. Increased emphasis on financial literacy and managing cost because the data on expenditure and impact is easily available.
5. AI will replace process and procedure, but *not* people and strategy.





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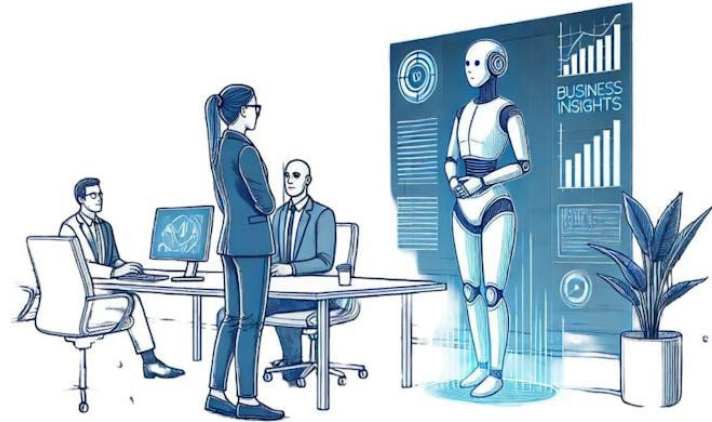
From enforcers to strategists

**How AI will change the role of safety
professionals**

From compliance enforcers to strategic advisors

AI will take over more of the compliance work and safety professionals will be freed up to focus more on strategy:

1. Leading AI initiatives
2. Interpreting AI-generated data.
3. Integrating initiatives and data into safety plans.
4. Influencing organisational behaviour and culture.



Future AI initiatives

Real-time hazard detection

AI-powered computer vision systems and sensors can detect unsafe behaviours and environmental hazards in real time. These systems can alert supervisors of hazards instantly, enabling immediate intervention.

Predictive analytics

AI analyses historical incident data, maintenance logs, and sensor inputs to forecast potential risks. This allows organizations to shift from reactive to proactive safety management, preventing incidents before they occur.

Wearables and smart PPE

Wearable devices track worker biometrics (e.g., heart rate, fatigue) and environmental conditions. AI interprets this data to identify early signs of risk, such as heat stress or overexertion.

Automated reporting

AI tools like Notify Spark streamline incident reporting and investigation, turning complex data into actionable insights. They can generate executive summaries, toolbox talks, and safety briefings tailored to specific incidents.

Training and simulation

Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) tools powered by AI provide immersive safety training, allowing workers to practice responses to hazardous scenarios in a risk-free environment.

Generating and applying AI-generated data

How might AI be generated and used?

1. Data is generated by the AI systems
 - Example: Identifies hazards and risks
2. Data is used to monitor and enforce safety compliance
 - Example: Real time alerts are sent to supervisors
3. Data is used to set safety strategy
 - Example: Hazards and risks are better understood



Multidisciplinary skills and collaboration

Safety professionals will need to understand:

1. AI tools, new and emerging
2. Data science fundamentals (e.g. extracting knowledge and insights from data).
3. Effective AI prompting
4. How to collaborate with IT and analytics teams
5. AI model limitations, for example:
 - hallucination
 - bias
 - incomplete data gives unreliable results



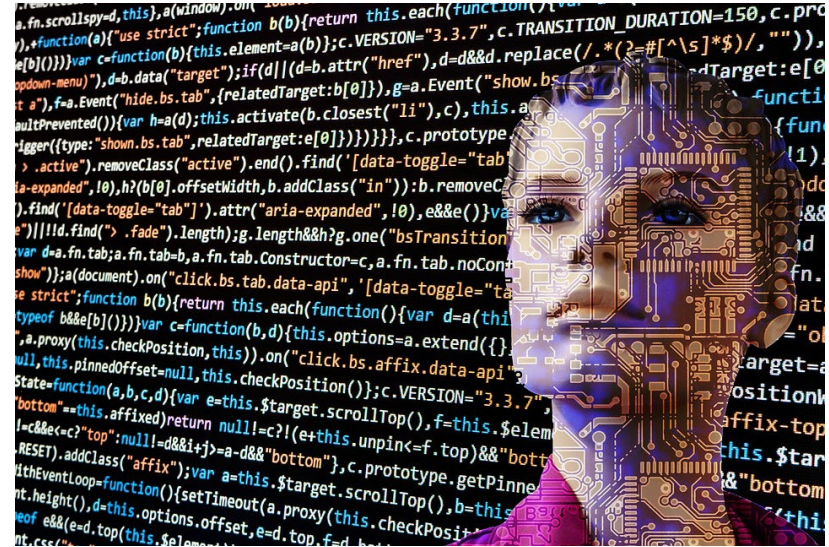
Augmentation, not replacement

1. AI is not replacing safety professionals.
2. It will, however, **augment** their capabilities through:
 - automation of routine tasks (e.g., audits, data entry)
 - freeing professionals to focus on high-value activities like risk strategy and leadership
3. This will require safety professionals to supplement their knowledge with understanding available AI tools and how to use them



The Predicament

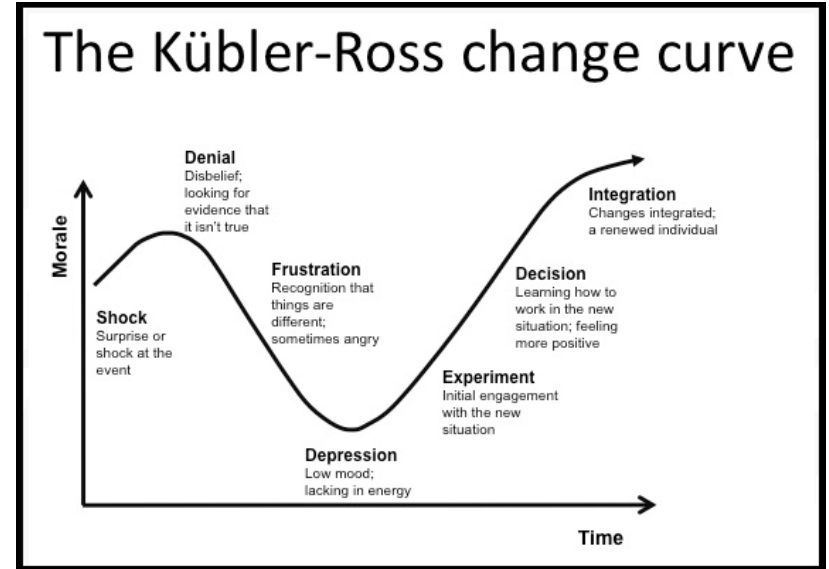
1. We don't know which AI tools are going to be useful and widely adopted.
2. We don't know where to get the training and experience in using AI tools.
3. We don't have the organisational infrastructure to support the selection and infrastructure of AI tools.
4. We don't know how to begin the AI journey in our organisation.



The Answer?

"The journey of a 1,000 miles
begins with a single step"

Lao Tzu
Chinese philosopher
6th-century BCE



Using AI in the Workplace

Opportunities:

Productivity and efficiency gains

Fraud detection and risk management

Process automations

Predictive maintenance

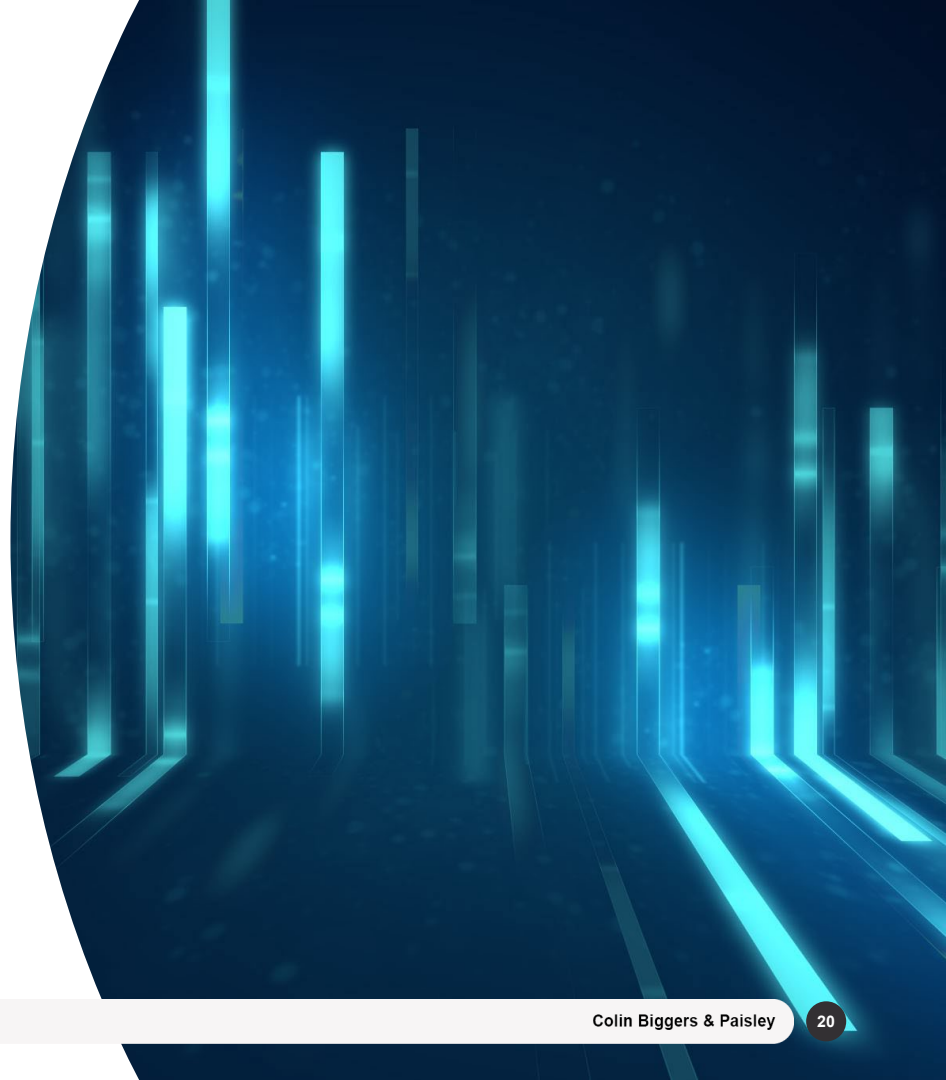
Risks:

Bias & discrimination

Hallucinations & misinformation

Data breaches & loss of control

Psychosocial risks (e.g. excessive monitoring, KPI pressure)



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Ethical and Legal Considerations

Privacy and the Use of AI

Key Legal Obligations

- **Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)** applies to all uses of AI involving personal information - both inputs and outputs
- **Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)** apply to the use of AI for Collection (APP3); Transparency (APP5); Use and Disclosure (APP 6); and Accuracy (APP10)

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's (OAIC) Guidance Highlights

- Privacy considerations are necessary throughout the selection, testing and deployment of AI systems
- Limit and safeguard data use - avoid public generative AI tools
- Inaccurate AI outputs are still covered by the Privacy Act
- Conduct Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs)

Privacy by design

Governance

Risk-based approach

Surveillance vs Worker Autonomy



- Surveillances (e.g. AI-driven performance tracking, keystroke logging) may breach privacy and contribute to **psychosocial harm**
 - Excessive monitoring - including outside of work
 - Pressure to achieve KPIs
 - Concerns regarding job security

Bias and Discrimination

Bias in Training Data or Flawed Data Sampling

- Historical data may reflect existing inequalities (e.g., gender, race, disability)
- If biased data is used, AI can replicate and even amplify those patterns

Bias in Feature Selection

- The selection of variables or attributes without human oversight risks embedding systemic bias

Lack of transparency

- Many AI models do not provide clear reasoning for outputs

Lack of human oversight

- Without review, unfair or inaccurate AI decisions may go unchallenged, which may lead to disputes and claims



Managing Redundancies with AI

“Scott Farquhar, Atlassian Co-Founder, at the National Press Club, 2025,

“If you make call centres twice as productive, then you need half as many people.”

There have been widespread high-profile redundancies in industries heavily exposed to AI.

What do companies need to do to manage the changing landscape?

- **Transparency about AI decision making**
What data is used, and safeguards in place
- **Targeted reskilling and AI literacy at scale**
Government guidance stresses enabling workforce capability as part of AI adoption
- **Redeployment and fair transition pathways**
Prioritise redeployment into adjacent or AI-augmented roles before redundancies.

Rise in Employment Claims

Extraordinary Rise in General Protections and Unfair Dismissal Claims

General protection claims increase by 27% over the past 5 years.

First quarter of this financial year saw a 24% increase in claims compared to the same quarter last financial year.

FWC is expecting more than 50,000 claims this financial year.

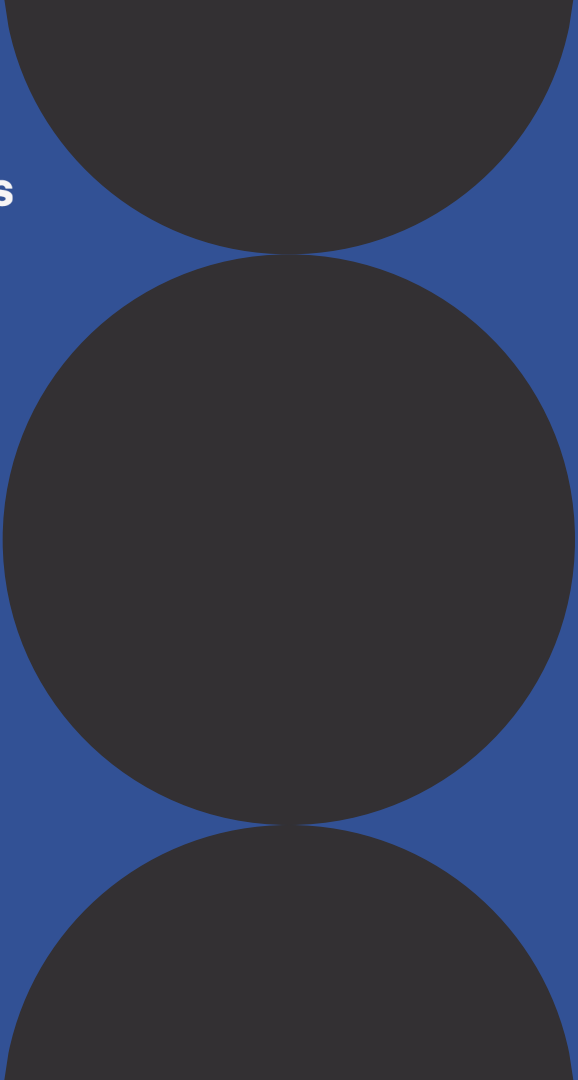
"Artificial intelligence is adding to the problem." - FWC President Justice Adam Hatcher

Reliability and Accuracy of Information Provided to the Commission

AI has significantly impacted claims by providing tools that can assist in preparing claims, but it also raises concerns about the reliability and accuracy of the information provided.

Four out of five applications never proceed to court if they fail to settle in mandated Fair Work mediation.

"Indicates that a large proportion of applicants are using the FWC processes to leverage a settlement".



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Critical Skills to Address AI Issues

How Employees Can Safeguard from AI

AI Competency Recommendations

Practical steps employees can take:

1. Build AI Literacy and Awareness
2. Practise Responsible Use of AI Tools
3. Develop Targeted Skills for AI-Augmented Roles
4. Engage in Continuous Learning and Reskilling
5. Participate in Governance and Feedback

Human Oversight is Essential

Oversight for accuracy

- **AI can “hallucinate”**: Generative AI sometimes produces fabricated references, misquotes, or non-existent studies.
- **Case in point – Deloitte Report (2025)** riddled with AI-generated errors, including fake citations and even a fabricated court judgment. The firm was forced to refund over \$97,000 after the errors were exposed.

Oversight to protect from bias and discrimination

- **AI reflects data bias**: If training data contains stereotypes or skewed patterns, AI can replicate and amplify them.

What Steps Employers Should Take

1. Monitor and Review

Although AI-specific regulation has not yet arrived in Australia, organisations should proactively adopt strong oversight practices:

Review contracts with AI vendors to ensure obligations around data security, transparency, and liability are clear.

Conduct Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) before deploying AI systems, especially where personal or employee data is involved.

Continuously monitor AI outputs for accuracy, fairness, and unintended consequences, with regular audits to catch errors or bias early.

2. Accountability

Employers must ensure there are clear lines of responsibility for AI use in the workplace:

Train staff on AI privacy risks, ethical use, and compliance obligations.

Appoint accountable roles (e.g., an AI governance officer or steering committee) to oversee deployment, risk management, and reporting.

Document decision-making so that AI-assisted outcomes can always be traced back to a responsible human authority.

3. Accessibility of Safe AI Use

Safe and equitable access to AI tools is essential for trust and adoption:

Develop clear policies on what constitutes safe and appropriate use of AI in the workplace.

Provide controlled access to approved AI platforms, ensuring employees don't resort to unvetted or insecure tools.

Offer guidance and support so staff understand both the opportunities and the limits of AI, reducing misuse and building confidence

Thank you.



Adam Foster

Partner, Melbourne
Employment and Safety



Cormack Dunn

Partner, Sydney
Employment and Safety



Matthew Giles

Partner, Brisbane
Employment and Safety

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& Paisley**

Thank you.

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