

Opening statement from Mr Sadler before the Joint Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence, Melbourne, 8 October 2026:

Good Ancestors has been working on AI safety in Australia for over four years. Over that time, progress has been rapid and is accelerating. The computing power used to train frontier AI models has grown fivefold per year every year since 2020; that's 600 times more than when we started working on this topic four years ago. Each year, better training methods let developers reach the same level of performance with about a third of the compute they needed the year before. New ways of making AI more capable have also emerged: test-time compute, where a model thinks before it answers, and agent swarms, where thousands of agents cooperate on a task. These factors are exponential and are driving dramatic leaps in AI performance.

AI is not slowing down; it's speeding up. Two years ago, AI couldn't count the number of 'r's in 'strawberry'. Last month it solved a math problem that had been stumping the world's best mathematicians for 100 years. Over that time, we've repeatedly seen risks that were dismissed as speculative become reality. Neither the National AI Plan nor the Prime Minister's speech mentioned loss of control, even though the speech came after the Medicare and Hugging Face hacks. The most ambitious AI activities Australia conceives of are out of date before they start.

Australia needs to get a say on its AI future. Our submission provides 10 ideas, and no doubt there are many more. The most achievable is a properly funded AI Safety Institute. We recommend \$50 million per year, plus compute and pre-release access to frontier models. The most impactful way to get a say on AI future is training AI in Australia, both in Australian based companies and in partnership with leading global companies. AI training is a powerful fit for Australia. Every country will run AI models, but only a few will build them. Training makes the most of our national strengths, including abundant space and clean energy. Unlocking training in Australia will help the domestic AI industry grow and deepen our relationship with the countries and companies that are leading in AI. Making many valuable contributions is not about leverage to use against others; it's about becoming a partner that others want to work with and have reasons to respect.

Copyright never conceived of a general purpose technology trained on the sum of human knowledge. Today, every frontier and foundational model is built in a country that has a pathway on copyright. We consulted on a permit-and-fund model that would allow AI training in Australia with strings attached. The permit would raise funds and secure opt-out. The fund would put hundreds of millions of dollars per year into the pockets of Australian creators. If we don't act, Australian creators will continue to have their works used overseas without compensation, and Australia won't get the benefits of building AI here.

Once we have a say on the future of AI, we need to use that say to protect Australia's

national interests. We need accident and incident reporting; embedded third-party safety evaluators; public interest compute; a measurement of AI compute, supply and demand in the country, along with a target that gets us out of compute deficit; and other commonsense policies. We also need to break the cycle of acting on risks only after they happen or acting at a scale that is far too small relative to the challenge. Australia is currently scrambling to deal with AI's cyber capabilities. We can't afford to be in the same position for AI's bio capabilities. Biosecurity risk is something that both Kate Chaney and Tim Watts have talked about on the public record, and that demands urgent action.

Overall, humanity is racing into an uncertain future. AI has already surpassed human performance in many domains. AI companies are pursuing recursive self-improvement. The US president has said, 'Whoever wins AI wins.' Our recommendation is that Australia urgently take a stake in the AI future and use that stake to protect our national interests. I'm happy to take questions.

Text as recorded in the proof Committee Hansard, 8 October 2026, page 26.