



Western Australian AI Hub

Submission to the House Standing Committee on Education: Inquiry into Building Asia Capability in Australia

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1.0 Introduction: A National Blueprint Forged in the West

The Western Australian AI Hub (WA AI Hub) is a community-led initiative, established to orchestrate Western Australia's artificial intelligence ecosystem. Our mission is to connect industry, government, academia, and the startup community to accelerate the adoption of AI in key economic sectors, foster world-class talent, and champion the development of safe, ethical, and inclusive AI solutions.

This submission is presented to the House Standing Committee on Education in response to its vital Inquiry into Building Asia Capability in Australia. We contend that Artificial Intelligence is the single most powerful enabling technology available to the nation for building deep, scalable, and nuanced Asia capability. Traditional methods, while valuable, cannot deliver the sophistication or scale required to secure Australia's prosperity and influence in our region.

The WA AI Hub's strategic blueprint offers a proven, practical, and commercially focused model for a national strategy. Our vision is to establish Western Australia as a globally recognised leader in the *application* of responsible and innovative AI, driving economic diversification and social progress. This submission outlines how this application-focused model can be leveraged to create a sovereign, export-oriented AI-enabled Education Technology (AI-EdTech) sector that directly serves the Inquiry's objectives and enhances Australia's long-term economic



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engagement with Asia.

2.0 AI: A Paradigm Shift in Building Asia Capability

To thrive in the Asian Century, Australia must move beyond analogue approaches and adopt a digitally powered, data-driven strategy for regional engagement. AI offers a transformative opportunity to revolutionise how we build linguistic skills, cultivate deep intercultural understanding, and prepare our workforce for a digitised global economy.

2.1 Revolutionising Language and Intercultural Skills for Export

AI can overcome the inherent limitations of traditional classroom-based learning, offering every Australian a personalised and culturally immersive educational experience. More importantly, it enables Australian innovators to build and export world-class AI-EdTech solutions tailored for the booming Asian market.

- **AI-Powered Tutors:** AI platforms can provide one-on-one language tuition at a national scale, offering real-time, granular feedback on the nuances of pronunciation and tonal variation in complex Asian languages. This technology makes high-quality language education radically more accessible and effective.
- **Culturally Intelligent Systems:** True Asia capability requires a deep understanding of culture. AI can power Cross-Cultural Intelligent Language Learning Systems (CILS) that teach not only vocabulary but also the context, etiquette, and nuance that underpin effective communication. These systems can simulate real-world scenarios, ranging from business negotiations in Jakarta to social interactions in Tokyo, enabling learners to develop practical skills in a safe and repeatable environment.

2.2 The Sovereign Data Advantage: Australia's Unique Opportunity

A critical barrier, but also a profound opportunity, underpins this vision. The vast majority of today's leading AI models are trained on Western data, which embeds a cultural bias that makes them less effective for use in the Asia-Pacific region. This is not just a technical flaw; it is a strategic vulnerability.

This challenge presents Australia with its single greatest competitive advantage. By spearheading the creation of high-quality, ethically sourced, and culturally diverse Asia-centric



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datasets, Australia can establish a unique sovereign regional AI capability. This would provide our domestic AI-EdTech industry with a significant edge, enabling Australian companies, fostered by the WA AI Hub's ecosystem, to develop and export products that are more accurate, respectful, and effective than their global competitors.

2.3 AI Literacy: The Foundational Skill for Economic Engagement

As Asian economies undergo rapid digital transformation, the ability to work with and alongside AI systems is becoming a foundational competency for all professionals. The most critical "Asia capability" for the 21st-century workforce is arguably AI literacy itself. The WA AI Hub's core mission to democratise AI knowledge and provide practical skills for the AI era is therefore fundamental to building Australia's international competitiveness. By equipping Australians with these skills, we prepare them for a world where economic engagement is increasingly digital and data-driven.

3.0 The WA AI Hub Model: A Blueprint for Exporting AI-EdTech

The WA AI Hub's strategy is designed to cultivate a pipeline of export-ready Australian AI companies and position the nation as a leader in ethical, humanity-centred AI solutions for the Asian market. Our model is built on four operational pillars: Ecosystem Orchestration, Industry Transformation, Startup Incubation, and Talent Development.

3.1 A Commercialisation-Focused Go-to-Market Strategy

Our core operational focus is on practical skills development and commercialisation. This is driven by a tiered curriculum designed to upskill the entire workforce, from small business owners to corporate executives in WA's key industries like mining and healthcare.

- **Tier 1: AI Foundations:** Accessible, hands-on workshops that provide foundational AI literacy to a broad audience, creating a large pool of skilled individuals.
- **Tier 2: AI for Professionals:** Deeper, specialised bootcamps tailored to specific professional roles and key WA industries, building a cohort of advanced users and developers.



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- **Tier 3: AI for Business Leaders:** High-value strategic masterclasses and bespoke corporate training packages that drive AI adoption at an enterprise level.

This tiered model serves as the engine for developing talent, validating use cases, and building products that can be exported to Asia. It creates a direct link between domestic upskilling and international market opportunities.

3.2 A Trusted, Community-Led Gateway to Asia

The WA AI Hub's unique governance structure, a community-led core with an industry advisory layer, is our key strategic differentiator. This model ensures we remain a trusted, neutral, and mission-driven "ecosystem orchestrator". This trust is essential for building the collaborative partnerships required for a successful export strategy.

By pivoting this trusted ecosystem towards international markets, the WA AI Hub is positioned to become a national gateway for Australian AI innovation into Asia. This role directly supports and operationalises federal initiatives, such as Austrade's mission to open a "digital gateway to Southeast Asia". We can act as the crucial onshore partner for these programs, identifying and nurturing high-potential AI-EdTech companies and preparing them for export success. The viability of this pathway is already being proven by Australian companies like Language Confidence, which has successfully raised capital and generated revenue in Southeast Asian markets.

4.0 Recommendations for a National AI-Powered Asia Capability Strategy

To realise this vision, the WA AI Hub respectfully offers the following synergistic recommendations to the Committee. These actions are designed to scale the Hub's proven, application-focused model to a national level.

1. **Establish a National Network of Commercialisation-Focused Hubs:** The Australian Government should formalise and support a national network of state-based, industry-facing innovation hubs, such as the WA AI Hub. This network would coordinate efforts and provide a streamlined interface for federal agencies, such as Austrade, to



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connect with export-ready innovators across the country, leveraging existing state investments and avoiding the creation of redundant federal bodies.

2. **Fund a Sovereign "Asia-Pacific AI Data Commons":** A strategic federal investment is required to create large-scale, high-quality, ethically sourced, Asia-Pacific-centric datasets. This national asset is the single most critical element for building a competitive advantage. It would fuel the development of culturally appropriate AI, giving Australian EdTech companies a decisive and enduring edge in Asian markets and positioning Australia as a world leader in responsible AI.
3. **Create Dedicated AI-EdTech Export Pathways:** Federal programs, such as Austrade's Landing Pads and the Export Market Development Grant (EMDG), should include a dedicated and specialised stream for AI-EdTech companies targeting Asia. Delivered in partnership with the national innovation hub network, this would de-risk market entry and accelerate the growth of a high-value, knowledge-based export industry.
4. **Lead by Example with AI-Powered Diplomatic Training:** The government should mandate and fund the development of AI-powered cross-cultural simulation platforms for training within DFAT, Austrade, and other relevant agencies. This would not only build superior skills within the public service but also create a powerful sovereign market, catalysing the development of a domestic industry for these advanced training technologies.