

Thursday, 15 January 2026

Australian Unions and Microsoft sign agreement on Workers' Rights and Artificial Intelligence

Microsoft Australia and the Australian Council of Trade Unions have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Framework Agreement that sets a new benchmark for workers' rights in the tech sector.

The MOU, also signed by the Australian Services Union, Professionals Australia and the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association, provides Microsoft workers recognition of their rights to join and be represented by their union, and affirms the rights of workplace delegates.

This is the first time a major technology company operating in Australia has made such commitments.

The ACTU and Microsoft Australia have also agreed to jointly develop and deploy resources to support workers' access to training and new skills development for working with artificial intelligence systems and products.

These resources will be available through unions, ensuring workers can develop their skills to engage with AI systems implemented in their workplace and more effectively contribute to its design and implementation.

Microsoft has committed to include mechanisms to elevate workers' voice in decision making, formal knowledge sharing, during the development and deployment of new and existing AI products. Microsoft has also pledged to respect the rights of creative and media workers and the vital role they play in Australian society, culture and democracy.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary, Joseph Mitchell:

"Workers through their unions have consistently raised concerns that AI is being developed and deployed without their voices being heard.

"Microsoft Australia's commitments to recognise the fundamental workplace rights of its workers and engage meaningfully with their unions is a first for global technology companies operating in Australia.

"Importantly, Microsoft has also committed to respecting the rights of creative and media workers and the vital role they play in Australian society, culture and democracy.

"For workers to benefit from AI, we must be central to the process, and this MOU is another positive step towards realising that.

"This partnership ensures workers will be able to access resources through their unions to better engage with and contribute to the design of AI systems in their workplaces.

"It's time for other big tech and large employers to catch up and get on board with a similar collaborative approach to AI, with workers at the heart of planning and implementation, not simply left to grapple with ill-conceived and enforced changes."

ENDS

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