

Monday, 20 April 2026

Unions Microsoft AI Workers' Summit

Australian Unions and Microsoft Australia held an Artificial Intelligence (AI) summit in Sydney today in a direct exchange between workers and local leaders within the tech company.

The summit was an opportunity for workers to share their experiences and concerns with AI adoption and was attended by local Microsoft leadership, tech developers, the ACTU, peak union bodies in New South Wales and Victoria and individual unions from a range of sectors.

The summit builds on a Memorandum of Understanding and Framework Agreement signed in January by key unions, the ACTU, and Microsoft, that sets a new benchmark for workers' rights in the tech sector.

The summit created an opportunity for Microsoft leaders and tech developers to hear from Australian workers across tech, banking and finance, media and other sectors, who stressed the importance of meaningful consultation rights on AI.

Workers also highlighted the negative effects of AI misuse; with the summit hearing from workers about job displacement, the theft of creative and media work, dehumanising systems of work and its intensification, as part of systems that discriminate because of engineered bias.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary, Joseph Mitchell:

"Today's summit was a positive demonstration of engagement between Microsoft and unions.

"Global tech leaders, managers and developers heard directly that for AI to benefit workers and have a positive impact; workers must be involved right from the start, our expertise respected and skills developed along the way.

"There have been too many botched AI implementation projects at Australian companies already, resulting in job displacement, theft of creative and media output, through to work intensification and ultimately de-humanising conditions in some workplaces.

"Unions are serious about the need to do better. We want other large corporations to join us in working together to secure positive outcomes. Employers must consult meaningfully with workers and their unions and take a collaborative approach to developing the best possible training and skills support where that's needed.

"Workers must be able to contribute to AI system design in their workplaces, or employers risk more ill-conceived project failures borne from enforced change that risks significant reputational damage."

ENDS

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