

New polling shows a majority of Australians back copyright reform over losing AI investment

61% of Australians want copyright arrangements that enable AI training while supporting Aussie creators

CANBERRA, ACT, AUSTRALIA, April 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Key Facts:

- Australians back a new copyright arrangement over the status quo — 61% support enabling AI training in Australia under different arrangements that still support creators, compared to just 15% who want current laws kept unchanged.
- Only one in four Australians oppose developing more flexible copyright laws to attract AI investment, when paired with new measures to support creators.
- 57% of Australians support a government-run fund that would collect money from AI companies and distribute it to Australian creators. Only 18% were opposed.

Australia's copyright law does not include exemptions that allow AI companies to train on copyrighted material like those in the [United States, the European Union, Singapore, and Japan](#). AI companies say that they are reluctant to build AI training infrastructure in Australia because of current copyright laws.

Australian law requires AI companies to licence material they can use for free elsewhere. Licensing material in Australia could undermine their legal position in other jurisdictions. As a result, AI companies train overseas, meaning Australia misses out on the investment and benefits of a local AI ecosystem and Australian creators receive little or no compensation.

The use of copyright material to train AI without a licence is subject to ongoing litigation overseas.

“Government is in a tricky position. It’s right to want to protect creators in the face of tech giants. But Australia risks landing in a position where we don’t attract AI investment, and creators continue not being paid for their work and not being asked for permission when it’s used to train AI,” said Mr Sadler, CEO of Good Ancestors.

The Public Lending Right Act 1985 offers an alternative model. It creates a scheme where Australian authors are paid for lost income from their books being in libraries. The scheme supports the enrichment of Australian culture by encouraging Australians to create and publish books in Australia.

A similar approach for AI training, funded by the AI industry, is possible. AI companies training AI in Australia could pay into a government fund. That fund then supports Australian creatives, like those who lose income because of AI. This arrangement could also have other requirements, like ways for creators to control if their work is used to train AI.

The polling data indicates that a majority of Australians want the government to facilitate a deal between AI companies and rights holders. The public library model has majority support.

"Any deal will involve compromise. A government fund that compensates creators and brings AI investment to Australia isn't a perfect solution. But it would give Australian creators a footing to negotiate for opt-out or opt-in or other arrangements that are important to them," said Mr Sadler.

"Currently, we're at an impasse. Government has a role to bring the AI industry and the copyright industry to the table and negotiate how much money AI companies should put into the fund and the policy specifics that should be attached," said Mr Samson Blackburn, AI Architect and 2025 Australian AI Awards Enterprise Finalist.

"AI will transform Australia's economy, its national security and its way of life whether we train the models here or not. The status quo delivers the worst of both worlds: creators get no compensation, AI companies build elsewhere, and Australia loses the economic opportunity and the leverage to shape what comes next," said Janet Egan, a senior fellow and deputy director of US-based Center for a New American Security.

About the polling

Polling was conducted by YouGov between 26 March and 2 April 2026. The survey included 1,511 Australians eligible to vote. Responses were weighted to be representative of the Australian population by age, gender, education, region, household income, 2025 federal election vote, and 2023 Voice referendum vote.

Respondents were provided with a contextual preamble explaining the current status of AI data centre investment and Australia's copyright framework before being asked the following questions:

Q1: Do you think the Australian government should develop more flexible copyright laws to attract AI investment, if there are also new measures to support Australian creators?

Yes: 48%

No: 24%

Don't know: 28%

Q2: Australia runs a government-administered fund that pays authors whose books are held in public libraries, recognising that others benefit freely from their work. Would you support a similar arrangement where AI companies training in Australia pay into a fund that supports Australian creators?

Yes: 57%

No: 18%

Don't know: 25%

Q3: If current laws in Australia requiring copyright licensing meant that AI companies invested in AI training overseas instead of Australia, would you prefer Australia to...

Enable AI training in Australia under a different copyright arrangement that still supports Australian creators: 61%

Keep current copyright laws unchanged, even if this means AI companies train overseas and Australian creators receive little or no payment: 15%

Don't know: 24%

About Good Ancestors

[Good Ancestors is an Australian charity](#) dedicated to improving the long-term future of humanity. [Full polling data is available here.](#)

Mr Gregory Sadler

Good Ancestors Policy

+61 401 534 879

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

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