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New Zealand examining AI ethical framework and action plan

The New Zealand government has called for swift action to create an ethical framework and plan for how the country will deal with the impacts of artificial intelligence.



By [Chris Duckett](#) | May 3, 2018 -- 02:12 GMT (10:12 GMT+08:00) | Topic: [Artificial Intelligence](#)

New Zealand Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media Clare Curran has called for urgency in developing an AI action plan and ethical framework.

"An ethical framework will give people the tools to

SPECIAL FEATURE

participate in conversations about artificial intelligence and its implications in our society and economy," Curran said.

"There are economic opportunities but also some pressing risks and ethical challenges with AI and New Zealand is lagging behind comparable countries in its work in these areas."

Curran also launched a report on the subject, [Artificial Intelligence: Shaping a Future New Zealand \[PDF\]](https://resources.aiforum.org.nz/AI+Shaping+A+Future+New+Zealand+Report+2018.pdf)



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<http://resources.aiforum.org.nz/AI+Shaping+A+Future+New+Zealand+Report+2018.pdf>.

The report said AI has the potential to increase New Zealand's GDP by up to \$54 billion by 2035, and even though people fear AI will lead to mass unemployment, that scenario will not come to pass.

"Widespread adoption of AI could take 20-40 years until it is expected to fully impact employment patterns," the report said. "During that time natural changes in the labour market will be significantly larger than any expected impact from AI and existing labour market support policies should be able to cope."

"Some commentators argue that due to the speed and scale of labour market change expected, AI is different to previous technology cycles. Our research does not support this

view.

"AI may also have a rapid impact on work patterns and education choices, but in unexpected ways. AI is often feared to have a major negative impact on jobs, however in this study we assert that AI will not lead to mass unemployment."

Recommendations made in the report included co-ordinated use of AI in government services, making sure AI weapons featured in the nation's cybersecurity strategy, and boosting the AI talent available within New Zealand, as well as attracting overseas specialists.

With a total of 14 recommendations made across six themes, the report emphasised making sure a diverse range of people were accepted into AI courses, to stymie the risk of introduced bias.

"New Zealand should pilot a programme to bring AI education to diverse areas such as geographically remote towns and to marae," it said.

In addition to creating an AI strategy and boosting awareness of the technology, the report recommends the development of "how to" best practice resources through working groups for industry and government to follow. Such resources may include AI investment case templates, portfolio management tools, case studies, and governance terms of reference, the report says.

A warning was issued in the report that the United States and China would dominate AI investment.

"The Chinese government has developed a national strategy which includes both commercial and military applications for AI and aims to make China the dominant global player with an AI sector worth US\$150 billion by 2030," it said.

"However, China's all-encompassing approach to individual data privacy would not be acceptable in New Zealand."

The report also recommended New Zealand takes a more prominent international role in striving for a moratorium and international treaty on lethal autonomous weapons use; considers how its no-fault scheme for car collisions will be impacted by autonomous vehicles;

and that its copyright law should be reviewed to consider flexible exceptions to remove a perceived competitive disadvantage with text and data.

"Ultimately, New Zealand's AI journey is approaching a crossroad, where we either choose to proactively help shape AI's impact on our economy and society, or we passively let AI shape our future lives. To shape, or be shaped?" the report concluded.

Last month, Curran announced a [refresh to New Zealand's cybersecurity strategy](https://www.zdnet.com/article/new-zealand-to-refresh-cybersecurity-strategy/) (<https://www.zdnet.com/article/new-zealand-to-refresh-cybersecurity-strategy/>), with the minister stating a larger number of cyber threats, along with the use of connected devices, provided new avenues to harm New Zealanders.

"So it's timely for us to step up New Zealand's cybersecurity efforts so that we are not left vulnerable to cyber intrusion and to refresh the 2015 strategy so we can deal with increasingly bold, brazen, and disruptive threats," Curran said at the time.

RELATED COVERAGE

New Zealand to refresh cybersecurity strategy (<https://www.zdnet.com/article/new-zealand-to-refresh-cybersecurity-strategy/>)

New Zealand Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media Minister Clare Curran has announced a refresh to the country's three-year-old cybersecurity strategy amid concerns of a growing threat landscape.

NZ Immigration rejects 'racial profiling' claims in visa data-modelling project (<https://www.zdnet.com/article/nz-immigration-rejects-racial-profiling-claims-in-visa-data-modelling-project/>)

Immigration Minister Iain Lees-Galloway rejected the idea the big data project that is determining who should be shown the door is profiling people based on age, gender, or ethnicity.

South Korea's IoT in full swing: From water meters to AI-powered smart buildings (<https://www.zdnet.com/article/south-koreas-iot-in-full-swing-from-water-meters-to-ai-powered-smart->

[buildings/\)](#)

In South Korea's small towns and big cities, the Internet of Things (IoT) is changing everything from utilities to subways to buildings as more municipalities and companies capitalise on new computing and network technologies.

[AI shouldn't be held back by scaremongering: Michael Dell](#)

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Artificial intelligence and machine learning are just tools that can be wielded for good and bad, the Dell Technologies CEO has said.

[UK government funds 1000 AI PhDs to push country's tech innovation](#)

[\(https://www.techrepublic.com/article/uk-government-funds-1000-ai-phds-to-push-countrys-tech-innovation/\)](https://www.techrepublic.com/article/uk-government-funds-1000-ai-phds-to-push-countrys-tech-innovation/) (TechRepublic)

More than 50 companies contributed to an AI Sector Deal that could be worth close to £1 billion.

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