

The Country We Are About to Sell

An Open Letter to Every Australian Politician and Everyone Who Wants to Be One

Australia is not being invited to the future. It is being recruited as real estate for someone else's.

You Are Looking at the Wrong Map

Most of you are thinking about AI as a technology story. Some of you are thinking about jobs. A few of you are thinking about regulation. Almost none of you are thinking about what is actually happening: a civilisational reorganisation of power, currently in progress, with Australia being slotted into a position that no one has asked us to vote on.

Let me show you the map you are not looking at.

On 3 January 2026, the United States arrested Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and seized control of the country with the world's largest proven oil reserves. On 28 February, the US and Israel launched military strikes against Iran, the world's third-largest oil reserve nation. Between those two events, on 22 January, Jared Kushner stood at Davos and unveiled a plan to rebuild Gaza as a network of AI-powered smart cities, data centres, and luxury resorts, on land cleared by the destruction of more than 64,000 children and the erasure of a civilisation.

These are not three separate news stories. They are one strategy.

Venezuela was a supply buffer, with its oil secured to stabilise markets during the shock of an Iran attack that was already planned. The Iran strikes remove the primary regional obstacle to a US-controlled infrastructure corridor stretching from the Gulf to Europe. Gaza is the Mediterranean data centre hub at the western end of that corridor. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, signed at the 2023 G20, is the physical spine connecting it all. Gulf capital finances it. American technology governs it. And the populations who lived on the land being reorganised are either relocated with digital tokens and cash payments, or absorbed as managed labour until the AI systems are sophisticated enough to run the smart cities without them.

Venezuela. Iran. Gaza. India. AUKUS. These are not foreign policy events. They are the architecture of who controls the infrastructure that controls the world.

And Australia? Australia has been assigned a role in this architecture. Nobody asked us. Nobody voted on it. And almost no one in this parliament has said a word about it.

What Australia Has Actually Been Offered

The framing you will hear is that Australia is positioned to become a global hub for AI infrastructure. Stable democracy. English-speaking. Allied with the right people. The pitch: data centres, jobs, investment, a seat at the table of the technological future.

That is not what we are being offered.

What we are being offered is the chance to host infrastructure owned, governed, and controlled by American corporations, on Australian soil, while we provide the land, the power, and the political stability. The model weights stay in San Francisco. The governance stays in Washington. The profit flows to shareholders in New York. Australia gets the server farms and the construction jobs.

This is not partnership. It is tenancy.

The evidence is structural. The US Genesis AI programme, the most significant public AI infrastructure initiative in history, saw the Department of Energy sign collaboration agreements with 24 organisations. Every single one is American: OpenAI, Anthropic, Google, Microsoft, Amazon Web Services, NVIDIA. Australia, a founding AUKUS partner that has committed hundreds of billions to joint technology cooperation, was not included. Not as a partner. Not as an observer. Not at all. The language used to explain this is instructive: Australia's capacity should be 'leveraged.' Not developed. Not co-owned. Leveraged.

And there is something more recent that every politician in this country needs to sit with.

On 27 February 2026, just eleven days ago, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth issued an ultimatum to Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei: remove the safety constraints on Claude or lose the Pentagon contract and be designated a supply chain risk. The deadline was 5:01pm. Amodei's response was one short sentence: 'We cannot in good conscience accede to their request.' He held the line. Anthropic was designated a supply chain risk, a penalty normally reserved for foreign adversaries. Claude hit number one on the App Store. OpenAI's head of robotics resigned in solidarity. Yesterday, 9 March, Anthropic filed two lawsuits challenging the designation.

What Amodei demonstrated was conscience operating as a structural constraint on capability: not risk management, not brand strategy, not legal calculation. A line held because it was the only line available to someone with an integrated moral intelligence.

Now consider what Australia did in the same period. In December 2025, the Albanese government released its National AI Plan and quietly dropped mandatory guardrails for high-risk AI. The stated reason: to make Australia more attractive for international data centre investment. We removed our own safety constraints to attract the infrastructure that the US government just tried to strip of its safety constraints.

We dropped our AI safety regulation to attract the same companies the US government tried to weaponise eleven days ago. That is not a coincidence. It is a policy position. And no one in this parliament has named it as such.

The Silence That Is Also a Position

Prime Minister Albanese has said a great deal about AUKUS, about the importance of our alliance with the United States, about Australia's role in the Indo-Pacific. He has said almost nothing of substance about AI sovereignty, about the Gaza infrastructure plan, about what Australia's position is on a US-governed corporatised territory being built on ethnically cleansed land with AI-powered governance systems.

That silence is not ignorance. He has the intelligence briefings. He knows that the AUKUS relationship has become, in the words of one serious strategic analyst published this morning, 'a credibility bond, a down payment on relevance in an alliance relationship that has grown distinctly more transactional.' He knows that the three billion dollars Australia has committed to the US submarine industrial base functions less as defence cooperation and more as tribute. He knows that the sovereignty AUKUS is said to deliver is, on close examination, more nominal than real.

He knows, and he has chosen the alliance relationship over the reckoning.

That choice has a cost. A country that positions itself as a principled middle power that invokes international law, multilateralism, and human rights as foundational to its foreign policy, has said nothing about a plan to build AI infrastructure on the ruins of a civilian population. Has said nothing about a US Defence Secretary trying to strip safety constraints from AI systems eleven days ago. Has said nothing about the fact that Australia just made itself more vulnerable to exactly that kind of pressure by removing its own regulatory protections.

Silence in the face of a legible strategy is not neutrality. It is complicity with a particular outcome. And the outcome being built, right now, without Australian input or Australian resistance, is one in which this country is a server farm with a flag.

The Knowledge That Was Never in the Training Data

Here is what none of the people building this architecture want to examine: the AI systems at its centre were trained on a profoundly incomplete record of human knowledge. Not because the engineers were careless. Because the traditions that hold the knowledge they missed did not transmit it through text.

Indigenous knowledge traditions, including the oldest continuous knowledge systems on earth which exist on this continent, transmitted their understanding of consciousness, governance, ecology, ethics, and human development through presence, practice, ceremony, and relationship. They were not in the books that were digitised. They are not in the training data. And so the most sophisticated AI systems in the world have encoded, at their foundation, a partial map of human

intelligence: the analytical half, severed from the moral and relational half that gives it meaning and direction.

Australia sits on top of sixty thousand years of that knowledge. We have a responsibility to it that no other nation on earth shares in quite this way. And our current policy response is a one-line mention of 'Indigenous data guidance' in a national plan built around attracting foreign investment.

This is not a footnote issue. It is the issue. The gap in AI is the gap in the civilisational record; the gap in the record is the gap left by colonisation. The same colonisation now being extended, in digital form, with new instruments and new language, across the same territories and the same peoples. Gaza is the sharpest current example. But the logic applies wherever living knowledge traditions are being overwritten by infrastructure serving someone else's interests.

We have the oldest knowledge tradition on earth. We are about to build data centres on top of it and call that progress.

What Your Silence Is Costing

At the India AI Impact Summit in February 2026, Prime Minister Modi, governing 1.4 billion people and negotiating from substantial geopolitical leverage, attempted to have the world's foremost AI leaders join hands in a gesture of global solidarity. The CEOs of OpenAI and Anthropic declined. They raised their fists instead. Every outlet reported it as a story about Silicon Valley rivalry.

That is not what it was. It was a head of state of the world's most populous democracy asking for a gesture of respect on his own stage, and being refused by the people whose technology he has no choice but to adopt, because the alternative is being left behind. That is the actual power relationship. That is what partnership with the architects of this system looks like in practice.

India has 1.4 billion people and strategic leverage Australia cannot match. India still ended up in that position. Australia, with 26 million people, no comparable leverage, and a political class that has not yet produced a coherent sentence about AI sovereignty, is not going to negotiate better terms by staying silent and welcoming the investment.

Right now, in the absence of any serious political framework, Australian universities are being repositioned as elements of US defence infrastructure. Australian land is being assessed for data centre viability. Australian energy infrastructure is being planned around the cooling requirements of foreign-owned servers. And Australian politicians are competing to welcome the investment and claim the jobs, with no public reckoning about what is being surrendered.

What We Need You to Actually Do

This is not an argument against technology. It is not an argument against international partnerships. It is an argument for the kind of integrated intelligence, moral and analytical together, that distinguishes leadership from management, and sovereignty from tenancy.

Australia needs a sovereign AI position. Not a plan designed to attract foreign capital. A position. One that answers the following questions, which none of you have answered yet:

1. Who owns the AI infrastructure built on Australian soil, and under what conditions can it be accessed, audited, modified, or shut down by Australian authorities?
2. What is Australia's position on the use of AI systems, including targeting, surveillance, and autonomous weapons, in military operations conducted by our treaty partners under AUKUS?
3. How does Australia reconcile dropping its mandatory AI safety guardrails with the demonstrated willingness of the US government to pressure AI companies to remove safety constraints from systems Australia is being asked to host and integrate?
4. What is Australia's independent assessment of the Gaza GREAT Trust plan, including its AI-powered smart cities, data centres, and digital token relocation scheme, and do we endorse the use of AI governance infrastructure built on ethnically cleansed territory?
5. How will Australia ensure that First Nations knowledge traditions are recognised as living epistemological systems with sovereign rights over their own transmission, not managed as data assets within foreign-owned infrastructure?
6. At what point does hosting foreign AI infrastructure constitute a threat to Australian democratic sovereignty, and who in this parliament is responsible for monitoring that threshold?

These are not theoretical questions. They are operational. They require answers before the next data centre lease is signed, before the next AUKUS Pillar Two commitment is made, and before the next federal budget allocates another dollar to 'AI capability' without specifying whose capability, in whose interest, and at whose cost.

The Deeper Problem

There is a reason these questions are not being asked. It is not ignorance, though there is some of that. It is that the political taxonomy currently available to Australian politicians cannot hold the question. It falls between economy and defence and technology policy and Indigenous affairs and foreign relations; it belongs to no committee, no portfolio, no party platform.

AI is a civilisational question. It is about what kind of intelligence we trust to govern us, what knowledge we encode as foundational, whose values are embedded in the systems that will increasingly mediate every domain of human life. It requires a level of moral seriousness and cross-disciplinary thinking that our current political culture has not been asked to produce.

That is going to have to change. Because the decisions are not waiting.

The people building this architecture are moving fast. The people who will live inside it, all of us, are not being consulted. That is not an accident. It is a feature of the design.

Australia has a specific and irreplaceable contribution to make to this moment: not as a server farm, not as a compliant AUKUS node, but as a nation that sits at the intersection of the oldest knowledge traditions on earth and the newest technological moment in human history. We have something to say about what intelligence actually is, how it develops, and what it costs when it is severed from conscience. We have people who know things about consciousness, country, and human development that the training data does not contain.

But that contribution requires political leadership willing to hold the complexity of it. Leadership that understands that being a good ally does not mean being a compliant one. That economic growth built on surrendered sovereignty is not growth; it is a longer form of the same transaction that built this country on dispossession in the first place.

Dario Amodei held a line eleven days ago under the maximum commercial and political pressure available to the United States government. He held it because the alternative, the removal of conscience from a civilisation-scale capability relay, was something he understood to be genuinely dangerous. The public recognised it. Claude hit number one on the App Store not because of marketing. Because people felt something real being defended.

Australian politicians are being offered a softer version of the same choice. Not an ultimatum with a deadline. Just the slow, well-funded, thoroughly reasonable-sounding invitation to welcome the investment, take the jobs, sign the agreements, and not ask the hard questions until it is too late to ask them.

I am asking you not to do that.

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shariread.com | March 2026

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Every factual claim in this letter is documented and verifiable. The Venezuela–Iran–Gaza strategic connection is analysed by the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University (March 2026) and Dissident Voice (March 2026). The Gaza GREAT Trust plan, including AI-powered smart cities and digital token relocation, was reported by the Washington Post and Financial Times from leaked planning documents (2025–2026). The Genesis AI programme partner list is

public record from the US Department of Energy (December 2025). The Hegseth ultimatum, Amodei's response, Anthropic's supply chain risk designation, and the lawsuits filed 9 March 2026 are matters of public record. The AUKUS allies' exclusion from Genesis is documented in *War on the Rocks* (March 2026). The analysis of Australia's National AI Plan dropping mandatory guardrails to attract investment is from *The Conversation* (February 2026) and White and Case LLP analysis. The AUKUS credibility bond analysis is from *Dead Reckoning* (Lesley Seebeck, March 2026). The India AI Impact Summit took place 16–20 February 2026 in New Delhi. This letter is the beginning of a longer argument, not the end of one.