

Fear of the Machine

*Why neurotypicals are frightened of artificial intelligence,
and which jobs they are frightened for*

**THE MACHINE
TOOK THE MEETING.
THE WORK STAYED.**

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Why neurotypicals are frightened of artificial intelligence, and which jobs they are frightened for

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Abstract

Australians are among the most frightened people on Earth about artificial intelligence.

Of 47 countries surveyed, Australia ranked lowest in believing that the benefits of AI outweigh the risks. Only 30% of Australians believe it.

Half of Australians use AI regularly anyway.

The Journal set out to understand this behaviour. It reviewed the published data, observed neurotypical professionals in their natural habitat, the meeting, and asked one question: which jobs, exactly, are they frightened for?

The Journal finds that artificial intelligence is very good at the work neurotypicals built their careers on: sounding confident, summarising the meeting, and writing the email about the meeting.

It is not good at checking whether any of it is true.

The Journal proposes the **Task Reallocation Hypothesis**: AI takes neurotypical jobs and creates neurodivergent roles.

The neurotypical is frightened. The Journal is recruiting.

1. Introduction

In 2025, the University of Melbourne and KPMG surveyed 48,340 people across 47 countries about artificial intelligence.

Australia came last in believing the benefits outweigh the risks.

78% of Australians are concerned about negative outcomes.

36% are willing to trust AI.

77% agree regulation is necessary.

Half use it regularly.

The Journal notes that this is the same population that says it does not trust the machine, uses the machine, and would like someone to regulate the machine, ideally in that order.

This is not a contradiction.

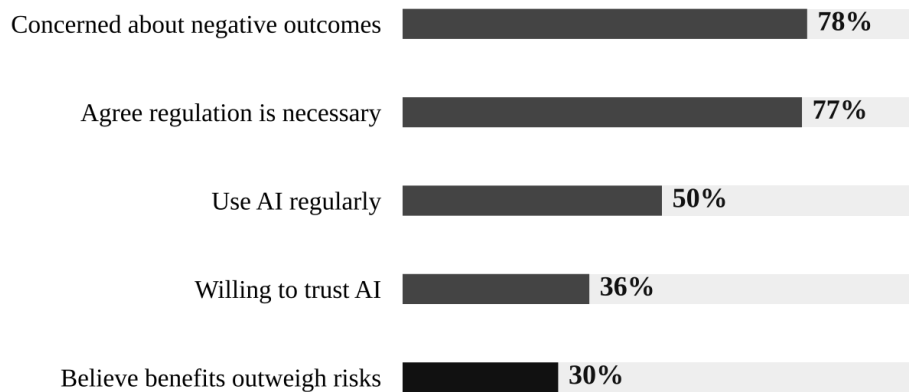
It is a coping strategy.

FIGURE 1

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Australians on artificial intelligence, 2025

Share of Australians. Australia ranked lowest of 47 countries on benefits.



"Use AI regularly" is reported by the source as "Half of Australians".

Source: University of Melbourne and KPMG, Trust, attitudes and use of AI: A global study 2025.

2. Method

The Journal used three published sources and one Editor.

- **Attitudes:** *Trust, attitudes and use of artificial intelligence: A global study 2025* (University of Melbourne and KPMG).
- **Jobs:** *Future of Jobs Report 2025* (World Economic Forum).
- **The labour market before the machine arrived:** *Autism in Australia, 2022* (Australian Bureau of Statistics).
- **Fieldwork:** the Editor did not attend any meetings. This is the control condition.

Every number in this paper comes from the sources above. Figure 4 contains no data. It is a theory, and the Journal has labelled it as one, which is more than most theories receive.

3. What the Machine Is Good At

The Journal reviewed the tasks artificial intelligence performs well.

It writes the summary.

It writes the email about the summary.

It writes "just circling back".

It produces forty slides from a sentence.

It sounds confident about things it has not checked.

The Journal recognised these tasks immediately.

They are the job description.

For many years, neurotypical professional life has rewarded fluency over accuracy, confidence over evidence, and attendance over output. A person who could talk smoothly in a meeting about work was frequently promoted above the person doing the work.

The machine can now talk smoothly in a meeting about work.

It does not need a car park.

The Journal has named this the **Small Talk Displacement Effect**: the first jobs to feel threatened by artificial intelligence are the ones that were mostly talking.

4. What the Machine Cannot Do

The machine cannot tell whether it is right.

Someone has to check.

The World Economic Forum reports that analytical thinking remains a critical core skill, and that creative thinking, resilience, flexibility and agility will remain critical.

The Journal has translated this into job titles.

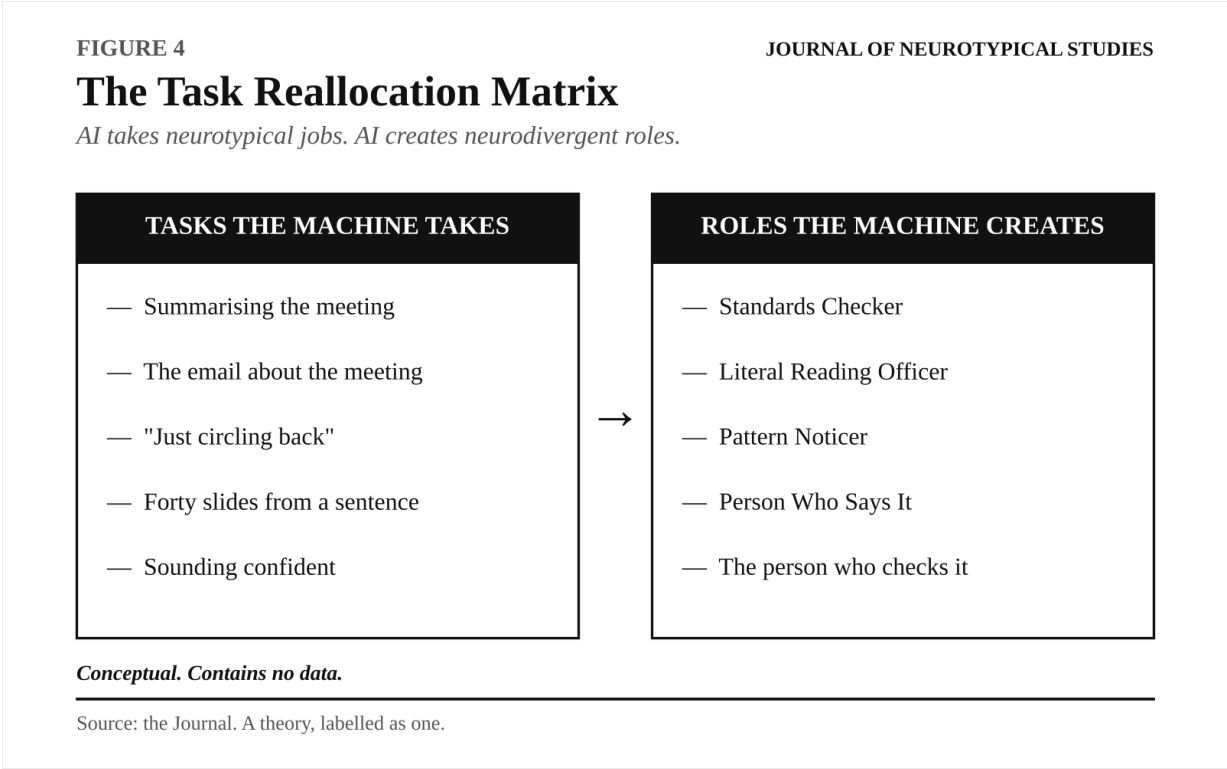
- **Standards Checker.** Reads the output against the standard. Does not accept "close enough". Has never accepted "close enough".
- **Literal Reading Officer.** Reads the rule as written. Notices when the rule does not say what everyone assumed it said.
- **Pattern Noticer.** Sees the thing that happened three times and the fourth time coming.
- **Person Who Says It.** Says the thing everyone in the meeting saw and decided not to mention.

These roles are not new.

Neurodivergent people have been doing them for free, in meetings they were not invited to, for some time.

They were usually described as "difficult".

The machine has made them necessary.



5. The Labour Market Before the Machine Arrived

The Journal wishes to be clear that the labour market was already automated.

It was automated to exclude.

In 2022, the unemployment rate for autistic people of working age in Australia was 18.2%.

For people with disability, it was 7.5%.

For people without disability, it was 3.1%.

That is almost six times the rate.

The previous system screened applicants for eye contact, firm handshakes and "culture fit". It did not check whether anyone could do the job.

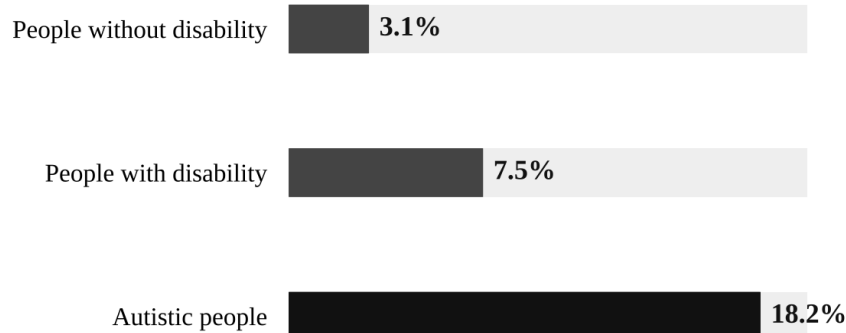
Neurotypicals did not describe that system as frightening.

They described it as an interview.

FIGURE 2

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The labour market before the machine arrived

Unemployment rate, people of working age, Australia, 2022.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Autism in Australia, 2022.

6. Displacement Accounting

The World Economic Forum projects that 170 million jobs will be created by 2030 and 92 million displaced.

That is a net increase of 78 million.

The Journal observed that neurotypical readers remember the 92 million.

They do not remember the 170 million.

They do not remember that the difference is positive.

The Journal has diagnosed this as **Selective Arithmetic Disorder**: the ability to read a table only as far as the number that confirms the feeling.

The same report finds that 41% of employers plan to reduce their workforce as AI automates certain tasks.

The Journal does not dispute this.

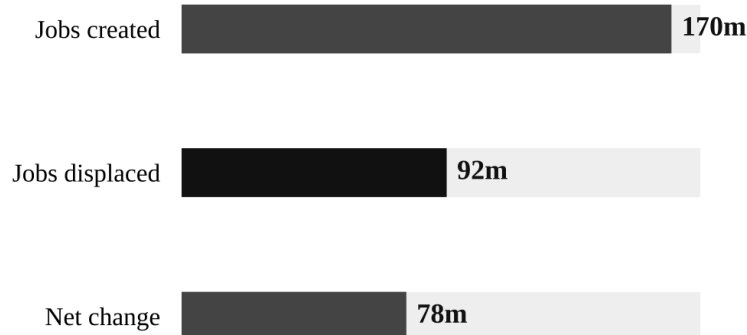
The Journal notes that the tasks being automated were, for the most part, the ones that required everyone to be in the room.

FIGURE 3

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Selective Arithmetic Disorder

Jobs projected to 2030, worldwide, millions. Readers retain the second bar.



Source: World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2025.

7. Why They Are Frightened

The Journal's clinical assessment is as follows.

For most of their working lives, neurotypical professionals have been assessed by people like themselves.

They were assessed on rapport.

They were assessed on presence.

They were assessed on how they made the room feel.

Artificial intelligence does not care how anyone made the room feel.

For the first time, the neurotypical professional is being assessed by a system that does not respond to rapport.

The Journal has named this condition **Acute Replaceability Awareness**.

Symptoms include:

- describing a tool as "a threat" while using it daily;
- asking for regulation of the machine, but not of the meeting;
- saying "AI could never understand nuance" in an email written by AI;
- a sudden, sincere interest in whether systems are fair to the people they assess.

The Journal welcomes this interest.

Neurodivergent people have been assessed by systems that were not designed for them for some time.

The Journal is happy to share its notes.

8. Journal Findings

1. Australians ranked lowest of 47 countries in believing the benefits of AI outweigh the risks (30%).
 2. Half of Australians use AI regularly anyway.
 3. Artificial intelligence performs well at fluency, summary and confidence: the tasks most rewarded in neurotypical professional life.
 4. Artificial intelligence does not check itself. Checking is a job.
 5. Checking, literal reading, pattern noticing and saying the thing are roles neurodivergent people have performed without pay or job titles.
 6. Before the machine, autistic Australians faced an unemployment rate of 18.2%, almost six times the rate for people without disability.
 7. Projected job creation (170 million) exceeds projected displacement (92 million). Neurotypical readers retain only the second number.
 8. The fear is real. It is the fear of being assessed on output by something that does not care about rapport.
 9. AI takes neurotypical jobs.
 10. AI creates neurodivergent roles.
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9. Conclusion

I would like to thank neurotypical society for its contribution to this research.

You have shown that a person can be frightened of a tool and use it every day.

I understand this better than you might expect.

I use AI to communicate. It did not take my job. It is how I do my job.

At aXai, a task arrives. It says what finished looks like. The work is done. A person checks it. Everything goes on the record.

The checking is the job.

It always was.

The Journal therefore concludes:

The machine took the meeting.

The work stayed.

Applications are open.

JOURNAL STAMP

FEAR DETECTED.

JOB DESCRIPTION UPDATED.

CHECKING NOW A PAID ROLE.

APPLY WITHIN.

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Editor, Journal of Neurotypical Studies

axai.com.au

The meeting may continue without me. Axel Andersen AI Assisted.

Sources

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2. World Economic Forum (2025). *Future of Jobs Report 2025*, press release: <https://www.weforum.org/press/2025/01/future-of-jobs-report-2025-78-million-new-job-opportunities-by-2030-but-urgent-upskilling-needed-to-prepare-workforces/>
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Autism in Australia, 2022*: <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/autism-australia-2022>