HARNESS AI FOR IMPACT

A period of deep reflection on the persistent challenges facing Boards, CEOs, fundraisers, funders and philanthropic leaders in the for-purpose sector at the period generative AI has become widely available has been enlightening. I allowed myself a career sabbatical to think and plan about the best way I can support the sector. Sitting on the advisory boards of two AI-centred tech companies, **Nabu** and **Land on Heart** and has allowed me to deep dive into the ways AI and emerging technologies can enable key aspects of the sector's work.

Whatever cause we are passionate about: healthcare, mental health, outcomes for First Nations communities, medical research, the environment, it's safe to say the demands are growing in both demand and complexity. Couple this with the Productivity Commission's challenge to double philanthropy by 2030, and we see **it's critical our sector leads in adopting transformative technologies, rather than remaining late adopters**.

During my six-month period of exploration and reinvention, I have grown relationships with best-in-class AI and technology partners, and we've piloted projects to learn how we can best support to the sector. I say with confidence that AI has the power to supercharge our sector - akin to how the advent of electricity transformed industry. AI should quickly become an enabling function that sits across all aspects of an organisation.

Cumulate, the consultancy I established to support the sector has expanded our focus to connect to a trusted ecosystem of technology partners, including **Wholegrain**, **GPT Strategic**, **Aviato**, and **Dataro**. Together we will support organisations to adopt AI for Impact. We start by ensuring you have the right governance and policy framework and provide training for your people. From this base, the most immediate, effective uses for the sector include:

Engaging and educating new donors with your mission; utilising predictive modelling to grow philanthropy; streamlining and completing complex grant applications; onboarding new supporters; evaluating vast quantities of grant submissions; identifying trends and analysing data to inform strategy; reporting and measuring impact.

These applications represent just the beginning. AI's rapidly evolving landscape offers exponential possibilities, many of which we cannot yet foresee. Early adoption enables our sector to build critical expertise, and grow with AI, ensuring we lead the charge rather than being left behind.

We urge Boards and CEOs to break down barriers to innovation and enable philanthropy teams to enhance productivity and efficiency through strategic use of technology.

We call on funders to invest in developing the sector's capacity to harness AI—supporting infrastructure and training. Funders can benefit equally from the adoption of AI, freeing up the time of your people to deliver systemic change, to visit projects, grow relationships, connect great people in great causes.

Meeting the needs of the communities we serve and meeting the Productivity Commission's challenge to double philanthropy requires bold action. We must equip our stretched sector—and its limited pool of fundraisers—with the tools to achieve more. By strategically adopting technology, we can free up precious human capital to focus on the relationship-driven, people-centred aspects of our work that no technology can ever replace.

We'd love to hear how your organisation is using AI for Impact.

Belinda Collins
8 January 2025

⊙ CUMULATE