# Transcript

**Generative artificial intelligence, as a tool   
for students.**

**Michael Kollaras**

You're listening to the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership podcast series, where we showcase conversations with some of the world's biggest thought leaders in education. We also bring you the thoughts and reflections of teachers and school leaders from across Victoria. Hello everyone! My name is Michael Kollaras and I'm one of the Expert Teachers in Residence for technologies with the Teaching Excellence Division here at   
the Academy.

Today we're joined by CEO of Parents Victoria Gail McHardy, who has been a leading advocate of the parents, carers of students across Victorian Government Schools. Today, we are discussing generative artificial intelligence, or gen AI as a tool and how schools and students are using it as part of their school learning experience.   
A particularly important aim of this podcast is to share key information with our parents and carers about how gen I can be used safely and ethically, so they can support their children at home by having informed and supportive conversations.

Thank you for joining us today, Gail. It is an absolute pleasure to be engaging with you in this important conversation.

**Gail McHardy**

Thank you, Michael. It's great to be here at the Academy and having this conversation. I wanted to kick off the conversation in asking you, particularly because the terminology is often overwhelming for parents and carers, because education is evolving at a rapid rate in recent years.

What is generative AI or gen AI, as you say, and how is it different from other technologies students might be using at school?

Yeah, it's a great question to start with. So generative AI is a type of technology that creates new content in response to prompts. This can include written text, images, videos, code or music. Unlike tools like calculators or search engines like Google that find and solve, gen AI produces news and material based on what it has learned, whether from the user or from data it's collected throughout time.

For example, if a student asks ChatGPT to help with a persuasive essay, you might suggest sentence starters, outline a structure or summarise different viewpoints. Search engines like Google direct you to existing websites. Gen AI does not. It generates responses in real time based on its training, which can be interactive and creative. But it does not always cite the sources, and we call those hallucinations where it gives you information that you might say is correct or it feels is correct, and that's why cross-checking is always important. That's something that I personally feel that a lot of our students don't realise is that they submit this essay that they think is a great piece of work, but they haven't cross-checked or cited what the AI has actually used that information for and from.

So, all in all, what this means is that   
Gen AI, you know, it's not just a tool, it's a new way of thinking about tools. And just like any tool that we use, whether it's a hammer, screwdriver, a calculator, it's always good to have a bit of a play with it and understand why it works and what it was made for.

**Gail McHardy**

Thanks, Michael, because we've been playing with AI a little bit recently too, particularly ChatGPT. And it's been really interesting because we know young people like to fact check. So that was a really great explanation. And I think for the parents and carers they need to hear that too, because you know, give it a crack yourself and just see how it works in that regard. But it would be great to share some further examples of how Gen AI is currently being used to support teaching and learning for Victorian students.

**Michael Kollaras**

Yeah, so across Victoria, we're seeing some really thoughtful and creative ways that schools are starting to experiment with Gen AI. Teachers are using it to adapt tasks, whether it's   
a writing or reading task, and using   
Gen AI to sort of differentiate their lessons and make it more accessible for those students that there's certain learning levels or abilities.

It's also a way that teachers can use   
Gen AI as a tool to make their lessons more engaging. So, let's just say you have a student that is really interested in AFL football, and your maths lesson really isn't hitting the mark with them. You could use Gen AI and say, I've got this maths lesson that I want to run, it covers this area of the curriculum. I've got a student that's really engaged in AFL footy. How can I use this lesson around football? And then it might give that teacher an idea like, oh, you could use this scoring system, you know, six points for a goal or a point for the outside, things like that, and then generating a problem-solving lesson around that sort of knowledge, which would help someone like me, because when it comes to AFL, I don't know all the terminology. So, for someone like me, that would be a great handy tool to have.

In some schools, teachers are also running workshops where students are encouraged to critique what AI produces. So instead of just accepting the output, they're learning to question it, to spot inaccuracies and build those critical thinking skills that are so important, especially in this day, and age. In art and design classes, students are using AI tools to generate visual ideas or play with new styles. It's not about replacing creativity, it's about giving them more ways to explore it.

And at home, some families are using Genoa as a bit of a homework helper, whether it's to brainstorm ideas or explain tricky concepts that students might be tackling. But it works best when an adult is involved, so working alongside their child, not just giving them the tool and walking away, it's learning together. So being a co-learner with your child in that moment, because it is such a new tool for us all, and to just say to your child, yeah, this is ChatGPT, it'll help you with your homework. Well, I can guarantee you 90% of the time that child will go, okay, well, I've got this formula I need to solve a maths, can you solve it for me? And they're not really learning then. But if you're they're asking, how do we get to this answer and what problem-solving steps are there? Then it becomes a partner in learning, rather than a doer of learning, which I think is really important. So, teachers are starting to use AI to help with lesson planning, scaffold learning or tailor feedback, especially to support students with different needs. And at the end of the day, it's all about purposeful use. Gen AI can absolutely enhance learning, but it's not there to do the thinking for students. We want it to spark curiosity, not short circuit learning.  
  
**Gail McHardy**  
Nope, perfectly understand Michael, that's really helpful because I think giving confidence to parents, and carers around trusting these types of tools in a way that they can break down, and help them to be able to guide their children as well. It's really interesting because a lot of parents, as I said, education's evolving, so we're not technically up to speed with a lot of the terminology ourselves. So, this is where AI can be a terrific tool in that regard, because it can break it up and can ask it questions, and it can do the research and can save time, rather than you looking at so many websites. We’re overwhelmed as parents and carers at times about how much information is out there. So, that has been really constructive and helpful, but as you say, the fact checking is so important, but also, not   
a heavy reliance without sort of making sure that you're putting your spin on things too, and your understanding.   
So, I think that was really helpful.   
Are there any recommended  
Gen AI learning tools that parents   
and children can explore together   
at home safely?

**Michael Kollaras**

There are so many. There are so many. I'll list a few, but there are some great AI tools that parents and kids can explore together at home. And honestly, the most important thing, as I said earlier, is co-engagement. So, that means sitting with your child and using the tool together, becoming familiar with it, even looking at the tools, terms and conditions, making sure that it suits their age requirements and their ability level too.

But, to make a long story short, a few tools that I recommend are ChatGPT for a start, which we're all very familiar with, with supervision of course. It's great for asking questions or summarizing books, and used as a brainstorming tool. It can really help spark curiosity, especially   
if you guide the conversation alongside your child.   
  
Then there is Craiyon, with ai in the middle of it. So, Craiyon is a free image generator. For example, you might type in ‘koala astronaut’ into the prompt, and it will actually generate an image of a koala that is an astronaut.   
So, it's a lot of fun and a great springboard for storytelling.   
  
Then we have Canva’s Magic Write  
is another good one. You can create posters or slideshows and the AI will help with writing if you're stuck. It's a very visual and student friendly tool to use. One that I like to use, especially as a bit of an icebreaker in some meetings that I've had, is Quick, Draw! by Google. So Quick, Draw! by Google uses an AI to guess what you're drawing, so it'll give you a prompt, it might say ‘boat’, and then you'll have to start drawing a boat. And as you're drawing, the AI will start guessing what you're drawing. And then it'll actually tell you how long it took the AI to guess what you've drawn. And it's actually quite fun to make it a bit competitive as well, to see who can draw a boat quicker and get the AI to guess quicker than the other person.   
So, that's another fun one to use, and it's great for understanding how AI learns over time and what sort of visual cues that it uses as well.

And finally, we have Khanmigo. So, we all know Khan Academy, most of us have probably heard of Khan Academy. It's been around for a little bit, but Khanmigo is an AI tool recently made by Khan Academy and it's like a tutor.

So, it's a chat bot that acts as a tutor   
for the child, and again, it guides them through that learning process. It never provides them with an answer, but it sees how the child's reacting to certain prompts or tasks, and it starts tailoring its tutoring around that and providing the student that clear pathway of what next step that child needs to achieve, or what learning goal that child has and what they need to learn. It also provides those reports to parents and teachers   
as well. So, Khanmigo is one that   
I really recommend as a tutoring tool   
for parents and teachers.

In terms of safety, there are a few things I always suggest to families. First, use the tool with your child first, a few times in fact. Maybe even use it before you introduce it to your child. Use it yourself first, so you become familiar with it and see if it’s suitable for your child. Because the last thing you want is to use a tool with your child in that moment and you're realising, well, this doesn't really suit the needs of my child at all. So, probably better to try it out by yourself first.

Second, check if the platform has any age-appropriate settings or filters and make sure they're switched on. And just keep reminding your child AI is there to support their thinking. So, you’ll probably noticed I reiterate that a few times to different questions. Again, AI is to support thinking, it's not to do the thinking for them. So, we're not replacing thinking. It's not a shortcut. It's a starting point. So, we really need to reiterate to our children that it's a starting point, it's a brainstorming tool, it's a guide. That's the best way to look at AI, not to be our problem solver or our doer.

**Gail McHardy**

It's interesting you say that because my first time of individual exploring AI, because I was a little bit reticent at first, I just like how it really prompts and provokes your curiosity and how you just want to keep asking questions. And it's very intuitive and it sort of gets to know you as a person, which is obviously why it’s AI! So, it’s probably good to know, are there any risks to children's data when using general AI? That will be a question that's at top of mind of parents, when you're using these tools at school, and how the schools manage that risk?

**Michael Kollaras**

Yeah, that risk is always a concern with any digital tool because so many of the tools that we use, on our computers, online, store our data and AI does that as well. So, the risks are, especially if students are using an AI tool, is they might type in their name, their address, any medical information they might have, and we don't know exactly   
what AI does with this information, where it stores it, where it sends   
that data.   
  
So, teaching our students responsible use is important. So, the good news is Victorian schools are taking this quite seriously. They're working in line with the Department of Education's policies and the national framework to manage those risks carefully. And in practice, most schools ask for parent consent before using Gen AI tools, and students are taught not to input personal   
or sensitive information as I   
mentioned earlier.

Personally, my classroom, when we were using AI. So, I created an AI chat bot once, that was a design thinking friend, I called it, and it would guide the student through the design thinking process. What I would tell my students before using that chatbot is, don't ever put your name into it. It's either student A, or you can put the number, and I used to give the students numbers according to where they were in my role. So, if they were student number one in my role, then they got the number one, if they were the 23rd student on the role they were student number 23, and they knew those numbers to use. And it also meant that when I looked at the chat logs later on, I could see okay, this is student number 23 and this is what they said to the chat bot. And even though the chat bot would recommend to me, these are the learning steps we recommend based on student 23’s chat log with the AI, it's still good to read through exactly what the child is saying because even though yes, the AI is such a powerful tool, but you also know your student better than AI ever could, because you've been with them throughout the year or   
years, even.

And that's one thing AI will never have on a teacher is that connection. And for any parent or carer who wants to learn more, a really great starting point is actually on the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership’s AI in schools webpage. It's full of helpful resources, including webinars the Academy has hosted around AI being used in our classrooms.

You can hear directly from expert teachers. It's practical and easy to follow. So yes, while there are risks, schools are putting strong protections in place, and there are some excellent resources out there to help parents stay informed and involved too.

**Gail McHardy**

Yeah, and it's like everything, we all have to take a personal responsibility about how we share information. So again, you know, an organization that likes working with experts like yourself around this space, it's really important to take these things on board. And, you know, as we say, experiment at first, but very be very mindful about all these sort of parameters that you're working within. And I think the other thing I would like to add there is that, you know, we're always mindful of certain, data risks and things like that. I think we can't ignore that.  
But at the same token, always keep communication lines open with your school. You know, it's really, best to check in first before making sort of any, you know, we've got to be realistic with our expectations. And like you said, you know, that having authentic relationships, you know, the teacher and the child that can never be replaced. So that's really interesting you've touched on that. So, you've touched on this before, but should parents be concerned that using AI in learning might lead to students becoming too reliant on it?

**Michael Kollaras**

I think, yeah, it's always something good to touch base on. So, it is a valid concern. And I always say it's about balance. You know, Gen AI should complement traditional learning methods, not replace them. We don't want students outsourcing their thinking, but we do want them to be equipped alongside these tools. To avoid overreliance, I do encourage children to think first before using Gen AI.

Treat AI as a starting point, as I mentioned earlier, not as a final answer. And ask reflective questions like what would you have done differently? And compare Gen AI outputs with classroom learning or textbooks. So again, cross-checking that information that AI has given you. And even if AI has given you an answer, if you read that answer and you know it's not something you could have come up with or it doesn't really sound like you, why is that?

You know, dig deeper. Don't just take what's given to you first off, and as you've probably heard in the past, you know, it's that saying that first efforts never really best effort. So, it's the same with AI, that the first response is not always the best response, and sometimes digging deeper is the best thing to do. This links well to the Digital Literacy in Victorian Curriculum 2.0, which includes teaching students how to critically assess digital tools.

And if we treat gen AI as a thought partner, it can help students learn more effectively. But like any tool like calculators, spell checkers or even books, it should be balanced with teacher guidance and critical reflection. Parents can also upskill themselves in things like prompt engineering, so knowing how to guide AI to a safer, more useful output. And again, we actually have an AI webinar that   
actually covered prompt engineering.

And it was actually one of the first webinars we ran this year, which can be found again in our AI in schools page.

**Gail McHardy**

Great. And again, we made reference to age appropriateness. So, what is the age appropriate for children to start using, for example, gen AI tools like ChatGPT?

**Michael Kollaras**

Yes. So, a lot of these tools have their own age requirements or restrictions, but it's kind of hard to tell because as you know, just like with anything, students are learning and growing at different rates.

And at the end of the day, a specific age is kind of hard to brand on certain AI tools. You might have an AI tool like ChatGPT, which is 13 plus, but it can still be used under that age with supervision, with   
a parent or a teacher. It's not recommended to be used on   
their own. In most cases, year 5 or 6 is a great time to start introducing Gen AI in a structured way. Around that age, kids are genuinely starting to understand what digital responsibility is. They’re curious, and they begin to think more critically about what they see online. And it's also that perfect time right before they become teenagers to tell them about online safety and what their social media presence and digital footprint actually is.

Now, it's really important that when we introduce these tools, it's done gradually as well and thoughtfully. So, that means teaching them how to ask good questions, how to check whether the response seems accurate, and having those conversations about safe and ethical use. And something worth noting, schools are currently working on developing a school wide AI policy.

So, if you're ever unsure, I would recommend checking in with your child's teacher or school leadership. Their guidance will help make sure that how your child is using gen AI lines up with your school's expectations. Like you said earlier, just asking those questions, there's no silly questions when it comes to AI. It's a new tool for all of us. It sort of came out of nowhere in 2022, I believe, and I believe it was over a Christmas period where all of a sudden AI just existed. And I remember sitting on my living room couch and AI just popped up and my wife looked at me and said, what's ChatGPT? And I said I've got no idea. I didn't even know it was becoming a thing. And then within weeks everyone was using it.   
It was quite phenomenal how that happened. Quite interesting, I'd say.   
  
**Gail McHardy**  
Yes, and trends are interesting, as we know, and I think that's really critical points in answer to that question and very mindful too, because we have a lot of vulnerable students, and we   
also have very diverse students in our schools today. And it's really important for them that these things can be looked at as a positive tool in supporting them too. And how often are teachers having to adjust the curriculum for all the levels, abilities, strengths and weaknesses, so, I think that's the really helpful point you've made there for the parents and carers. But I suppose then, how can parents and teachers work together to help children use Gen AI tools responsibly?

**Michael Kollaras**

So, one of the biggest things I always come back to is that communication between schools and parents, that's where everything really starts. If there's a miscommunication, it's kind of hard to move forward, especially in terms of AI as well. If your child is starting to use Gen AI in school or even just exploring, it's really, worth having that quick chat with their teacher and ask, how is it being used in the classroom and what is the use being used for?

And if they have a policy in place. A lot of schools are still working on these policies because it is so new and developing, and they make sure to develop them in line with the Department of Education and national guidelines. So, things are evolving, and most schools are starting to get this on track. At home, one of the biggest things you can do is simply ask your child, how did you use AI today? What did it help you with? and what did you figure out on your own? And I believe that last question is really important, because if your child says I used AI to do this, but then you said, what did you do on your own? And then they say well, I don't know, I just used AI. Well then, again, it's AI doing the learning for them, it's not being a partner in learning. And we want it to be a partner in learning, we want it to guide them, not do it for them. So that last question I do feel is super important. Again, making it human again. What did you do on your own? And it'll be interesting to say how many students say back to their parents, I don't know.

**Gail McHardy**

Yeah, and and using it as a reference tool, that's critically important. And just on the policy piece, I think it's really important for parents and carers to remember the assumption is made that parents know where to find all this information easily. But as a state parent organisation, we can, reassure parents predominantly, every Victorian school now has the policies uploaded onto their websites and easily accessible.

But we also, alert to parents and carers that are not aware, that the Policy and advisory library, which was referred to as PAL, is also publicly accessible. It is predominantly for schools, but it also has a public facing, interface. So, it's really useful to check there too. So then when you're asking your questions and again, Gen AI, I could help with this, when you're trying to ask respectful questions of the school, maybe Gen AI could help you with that.

Because some people do struggle to ask authorities questions. And, I think this is where, you know, we think, practically and carefully about how we work with our schools and our teachers.   
  
**Michael Kollaras**  
  
I couldn't agree more. Yes, and just to add one more extra bit, something that I feel is important to say is that some schools are actually running workshops or some schools might even send home resources about AI.

And I know I did as a teacher, so those parents were aware that their students were using AI just to make them a bit more familiar. And that was back in

2023, I believe. So, AI was only out for a few months at that stage, so it was quite a new concept. But I really want to form that partnership with the parents of my school. So, letting them know what we were doing in our maker space, how we're using the AI chat bots. And, I actually got a very overwhelming positive response from the parents ‘this is great, do it’ which was nice to see for a change, because you would, expect the other, especially with a new and unsure tool. But the support I got was quite phenomenal. So yeah, again, that communication between parents and schools is super important. Just to circle back to that start. So, if you're not sure, ask, don't assume.

**Gail McHardy**

And that's great Michael. Because Parents Victoria is all about effective communication and the power of parental engagement. So that is great to hear and see when people put that into practice, because parents want to be able to trust in their teacher, they want to trust in the school. And it's all about the quality of the relationship. So, thank you. So, what should parents prepare their children for in an AI driven future?

**Michael Kollaras**  
  
Yeah, so the future is something that we're all wondering about now, isn't it? Because with everything changing so fast and just the way technology and everything in general, you just can't keep up. I feel like I try and keep up with AI every day, and I might learn ten new things about AI, but then by the next day there is 100 new things. So, it's always that never ending battle to prepare. And that question, I enjoy it a lot, only because I like to state how AI can't replicate compassion, fairness, or care. Those human elements that we have.

So, equipping your child with emotional intelligence and strong moral compasses, they'll become essential in human centered workplaces and as leaders. So, help them spot misinformation, protect their privacy, and navigate the online world safely. Skills that will only become more critical with AI generated content and can be honed through practice. Digital discernment, the ability to critically evaluate and make informed decisions about information encountered online, which is going to be everywhere for our children. And thinking about future jobs and the AI driven future.

Some of the key skills that our students will need are critical thinking, adaptability, ethical decision making and creativity. And all of these intertwine with AI so much, especially that ethical decision making. So parents can support this by being curious about the technology, learning alongside their children, and modelling lifelong learning, especially around AI. Something that was stated in the World Economic Forum in their 2025 Future Jobs Report, they said that Gen AI is going to be the top skill that businesses will be looking for in the future, and that was already listed as of 2023. So only a year after Gen AI really became a thing. The Future Jobs Forum said, well, what most careers and businesses are looking for now is people with those AI skills, whether it's prompt engineering or knowing how to use a chatbot, or customize a chatbot for a website or a particular business. So, these skills are definitely going to be within their job in some capacity, whether it's a lot or a little bit, it's going to be in there regardless.

**Gail McHardy**

Yeah, it's just a very interesting, world we're looking forward to in the future. And I think this is where if parents and carers can get ahead of the game and support their children to have as much as they can in their backpack, that will be really important. And I like how you've, again, about the ethical decision making, because I think this is another thing that I just say you can never replace that human capacity, relationship piece.

So, this is why it’s really important Parents Victoria is having a conversation with the Academy and working alongside people like yourself to make sure people do have knowledge and have access to information.   
  
Is there a risk, considering we do live in a difficult world, around the equity issue. Is there a risk that AI could widen the gap between students that have access to digital tools and those who don't?

**Michael Kollaras**

Yeah, so that'll always be a risk, especially with the digital divide that we've heard thrown around so much. Those who have access to tools and those who don't. And it's really important rule, there is always going to be that risk that I could widen the gap between students who have access to digital tools and those who don't.

It's something we need to keep at the front of our mind. And while we're not there yet, there's a strong aspiration across the system to make access more equitable over time, and these steps involve ensuring that students across schools and backgrounds have access to devices and internet, providing professional learning so teachers feel confident using gen AI in a safe, ethical, and creative way, building community partnerships like tapping into local libraries or learning hubs to offer extra access and support outside the classroom. The goal is to make sure that every student has the opportunity to benefit from Gen AI, not just those who already have the tools at home. It's definitely something we're working towards together as a system, school, or even as parents ourselves.

And it actually makes me reflect on one student that I know of, not from the school that I'm from, but just a student that I do know. They actually asked me, I don't have an iPad, how do I access AI? Because my friends are using it and I actually recommended for them to go to their local library. And the local library actually had iPads that they could borrow inside the library. They couldn't take them home, but they were able to use them at the library and even use the computers there and experiment in that way. So even though they didn't have the technology at home, they were actually able to communicate with their parent that's what they wanted to do, the parent was very open to the idea. They went to those local libraries and actually got their children to experiment with AI. And funnily enough, within that year, after the parents saw how much the child had achieved and was evolving and adapting and ended up buying him an iPad for Christmas. It’s just seeing that growth over time and the way that the parents were very open to the idea, just completely changed that whole mindset and shift.

**Gail McHardy**

You know, that's a terrific example.  
And it's a reminder too, as a state parent organisation, what parents and carers and our teachers in schools to remember as an education stakeholder we do have conversations with the department and government and the opposition in relation to future, you know, setting up our community to have the best access for those families and children that don't have, or are not   
as privileged as some.

So the example of the libraries are really important because I think we forget some of the community resources we have locally, that we could all be calling upon at times. And, so that that's great sharing that library example.

Is there any concern that AI will replace teachers in the future? This is on top of minds of people, I have to say Michael.

**Michael Kollaras**

Look, not being bias, but I hope not.   
And I don't think so. But look, it's a big question to tackle. Will AI replace teachers? Short answer no. And to be honest, it's not even close. We talked a little bit earlier about that human connection, and that's something AI will never have on a teacher.

So, teachers, they know their students, they know they students parents, they at times know where their students have come from, what battles that those students might have. And AI doesn't have that information. AI just knows what it has from a chat log. It doesn't have that connection. So, teachers, as you know, they do so much more than delivering content.

They build those relationships. They notice the little things. They respond to the mood of the room and support students in a way that AI could never. Now, sure, AI can be helpful. It may take some admin, help draft feedback, or generate a few lesson ideas, but that's actually a good thing, it's not a lazy thing because I've heard the word lazy be thrown around.

Our teachers use AI to use an engaging hook, because I couldn't think of it themselves, but in the ten minutes that teacher might have took, going back to the child with the AFL footy prompt, it might take ten minutes to think of a really good lesson around AFL footy, but if I can get AI to do it for me in 10s then that other nine minutes and 50s I can spend on other things like building that relationship with my students, putting effort into other areas of learning, being in focus groups of my students, rather than sitting there looking at a piece of paper thinking, how do I write an AFL prompt for my problem solving lesson? So, again, what AI simply can't do, it can't build relationships. It won't notice when a child's confidence is low or when they need encouragement. It can't read context like picking up the emotional tone of the room or adjusting the lesson on the fly. Only a professional can do that. It can't model values. Kids learn empathy, fairness, and resilience by watching adults around them. And definitely can't adapt in the moment in the way a good teacher does.

Responding to a question, a spark of curiosity, or even when there's a bit of mischief in the classroom. So, yes, AI will change parts of teaching, but the human side of it, that's here to stay.  
  
**Gail McHardy**

Yeah, no, I agree with you because even in the early stages of my use, it's that it may be intuitive, but you have to put the content in for it to respond. And so, in my view, it's just a tool. It doesn't, it can't do that human bond, that we can do like we're doing across the table right now on this podcast, for example.

Yeah, so I appreciate your honesty in those answers.   
  
And if my child was to use ChatGPT to complete a school task, how shall I respond or guide them as a parent? If you were starting out, for example.

**Michael Kollaras**

If your child has used something like ChatGPT to help with a school task, the first step is not to panic. Even I panicked a little bit, because I've got children of my own and I'm a technology teacher. But don't panic. Honestly, it's a great opportunity to have a really valuable conversation. Start by being curious rather than critical. You might ask, what did ChatGPT help you with or what did Gen AI help you with? Did it give you new ideas or did it just do the work for you? And how would you have done this differently if you didn't have the tool?

Again, that last question like if AI didn't exist, how would you have achieved what you have today? It's not about catching them out, it's about helping them reflect. If they've used the AI to brainstorm or better understand the task, great, that's a productive way to learn. But if it's a straight copy and paste with no thinking behind it, that's why we pause and talk about academic integrity and what it means to take pride in your own thinking.

The goal here isn't to ban the idea of AI or punish its use. It's to help kids use it thoughts thoughtfully, ethically, and with purpose. We want them to become critical users of these tools, not passive ones. And it's also important to check in with the school, different schools, and sometimes different teachers or subjects have different expectations. Some allow Gen AI use, if students are transparent about it, others may treat uncredited use as plagiarism. So, it's worth helping a child learn to ask first and be clear on what's okay and what's not. In the end, it's all about helping them build good habits they can follow and carry forward. No matter how much AI becomes part of their world.

**Gail McHardy**

Just reflecting on the comments regarding teachers being lazy, I thought it was really important in this podcast to just remind people that understanding the pressures the workforce is under and the fact that, our teachers will be really appreciative of not just additional, human resources to support them in schools, because we would be advocating for that all the time.

But having something like this to also help, like you described in time saving, in order to have more time with the student to build the relationship is critically important. And I think that, you know, I would encourage parents and carers to be on board with that, to accept that as an opportunity rather than as a challenge.

And, I just think it's been a really valuable chat, Michael today, which I so much appreciated.

**Michael Kollaras**

Yeah, I agree, I could talk about this all day with you, to be honest. It's something I'm quite passionate about. I've gone from being very unsure in where AI stood in my career to now, I do use it every day as a partner.

So, it guides me, I mean, if I've had one less coffee than I should have, and I'm like, this email sounds a bit too blunt, can you make it sound a bit friendlier for me? And I’m like, yep, that sounds great! So again, I've already written the email, but I've used AI just to change the tone a little bit because as you know, sometimes you might need that 1 or 2 coffees, especially if you're a parent.

But again, it's a tool that I now use daily. And I feel like once people get used to   
AI as a tool and using it in that ethical and responsible way can really shift the workforce and just the workload in general, and just make it better for everyone, including our students and children. And, on on that note, Gail, I think we'll leave this conversation here.

I know, like I said, I could talk about it all day. And I just want to thank you as well. Gail, CEO of Parents Victoria, for your incredible insights and questions regarding AI, and for your continued advocacy and support for parents and carers of students in our schools. It was really great chatting with you today.

**Gail McHardy**

And I'd like to say thank you, Michael, and the team behind this, organising the podcast, because Parents Victoria working in collaboration with the Academy has been so constructive, and very informative.

And it also continues to build the relationship between teachers and parents as well. So, I think this is a fantastic opportunity and look forward to sharing this resource with parents and carers so they can learn more.   
So, thank you.   
  
**Michael Kollaras**  
Thank you.