

AI Governance
**Lighthouse
Case Study**



Key Governance Insights

Existing governance mechanisms have been strengthened, not reinvented

Over recent years, Canteen has deliberately evolved its governance approach to support responsible innovation and the adoption of emerging technologies at scale. Rather than creating parallel practices and structures, Canteen will continue to adapt and enhance existing functions to enable governance to address evolving capabilities, risks and opportunities.

AI was treated as a strategic risk and opportunity early in its AI governance journey

Canteen formally identified both the misuse and underutilisation of AI, as well as the opportunities it offers to enhance impact and effectiveness, as key strategic considerations when its Board structured its early approach to AI.

AI adoption is being structured through a conscious governance lens

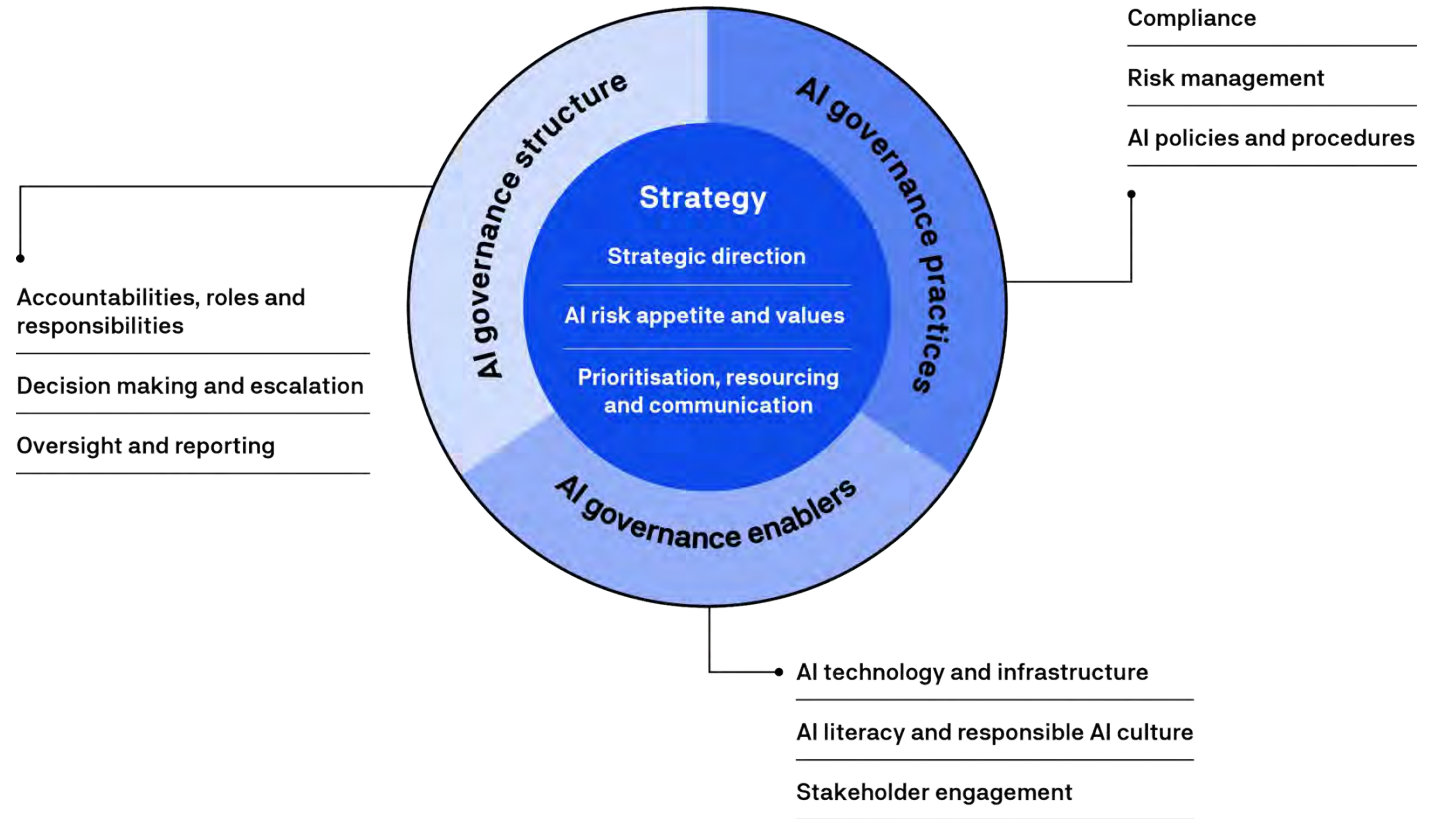
Canteen approaches risk through a continuous improvement lens, recognising that effective risk management enables innovation, learning, and organisational maturity.

Human connection is a non-negotiable design fundamental

AI is being framed as a tool to augment and enhance staff capability, not to replace or undermine human-oriented services. Canteen is explicitly committed to engaging the individuals and communities it serves on where and how AI should be used.

HTI's AI Governance Operating Model

This case study explores Canteen's approach to the four components of HTI's AI Governance Operating Model:





How is Canteen governing AI?

Canteen is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting Australians aged 12–25 impacted by cancer. Its governance model is distinct, with its constitution requiring that the majority of the Board of Directors are young people with lived experience of cancer, either directly or through a close personal connection. The Board Chair is also drawn from this cohort, ensuring that the perspectives of those Canteen serves are represented at the highest level of decision-making.

In collaboration with its staff and members within the Canteen community, Canteen has decided to embark on an AI governance uplift and monitoring journey, guiding the development of its governance structures, practices, and enablers around HTI's AI Governance Operating Model.

Canteen has pursued a number of initiatives to ensure technology better serves its community. Its approach to AI governance is grounded in a culture of responsible innovation and continuous improvement, where emerging risks are actively managed alongside the opportunities AI presents, rather than adopting a purely risk-averse or risk-fixated stance.

This case study will form part one of a two-part series, set to track Canteen's 12-month **AI Sprint Committee** to uplift their AI governance and identify innovation opportunities. This first part will establish Canteen's efforts to date, including the establishment of the AI Sprint Committee, as well as the various initiatives it is pursuing across AI governance and innovation.

Upon completion of the 12-month sprint, Canteen will decide where and how to integrate the functions of the AI Sprint Committee into existing governance bodies and practices, building in lessons learnt and embedding uplift priorities based on the identified areas of improvement.

Strategy





What is Canteen's strategy for AI?

Canteen's AI strategy for AI use and governance is purpose-led and is explicitly aligned to the organisation's mission to support young people impacted by cancer. Canteen considers its strategic approach to AI to revolve around four core pillars:

1

Maximising the impact of our human connection

AI is used to reduce administrative burden and free up time for staff to focus on what matters most: supporting young people, families, and supporters with care, empathy, and expertise. AI is designed to augment, not replace, human judgement and relationships.

2

Unlocking organisational knowledge

AI helps organise and connect fragmented information across the organisation, enabling staff to quickly access trusted knowledge, reduce duplication, and make more consistent and informed decisions.

3

Building capability across the organisation

Canteen is committed to ensuring all team members feel confident and supported in using AI. This includes building foundational capability, providing clear guidance and boundaries, and enabling responsible experimentation within appropriate guardrails.

4

Elevating engagement and experiences for supporters and service users

AI is used to improve accessibility, responsiveness, and relevance of Canteen's services and supporter interactions, while maintaining trust through transparent, ethical, and responsible use.



What is Canteen's strategy for AI?

AI is being adopted and initiatives are prioritised through normal annual planning and senior leadership decision making, and are not being fast-tracked just because they involve AI. For Canteen, a clear, explicit rationale, aligned to the organisation's values and mission, is required prior to any AI use.

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AI can play an important role in supporting our work, but it should never replace the human connection that sits at the heart of what we do. Our approach has been to take a considered, values-led path, where every use of AI is grounded in purpose, backed by governance, and ultimately designed to better support the young people we serve.

Malia Emberson-Lafoa'i, Canteen Board Director and Chair of AI Sprint Committee

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AI Governance Structures





How is Canteen designing AI governance structures?

The AI Sprint Committee oversees most activities and initiatives relating to AI at Canteen. For 12 months, the AI Sprint Committee will serve as a transitional governance structure to guide Canteen's early exploration and experimentation with AI. Consisting of, and reporting to, members of the Board, the Committee has been tasked with identifying and mitigating the risks associated with AI, whilst remaining alert to its potential benefits.

Canteen's AI Sprint Committee will:

- Help define AI guardrails and red and green lines,
- Develop relevant governance artefacts, including charter, guidelines, risk frameworks, and policy documents,
- Embed AI risk into its broader governance regime, and
- Provide early Board oversight and quarterly reporting during Canteen's AI adoption and governance journey.

The Committee will hold discretionary authority to develop and endorse governance materials, with final approval resting with the Board.

The AI Sprint Committee is composed of individuals from across Canteen, with each representing a diverse perspective and background. The Committee is chaired by a Board director with a background in AI, and several other Board members included as participants. Other participants across Canteen's operations come from risk, compliance, fundraising, and technology.

Though the AI Sprint Committee remains an interim body, it reflects Canteen's hybridised mode of AI governance. The Board reserves centralised oversight for high-risk AI use, but has delegated much of the identification, innovation, and early governance efforts – including for low-risk use cases – to the Committee. This hybrid model allows Canteen to stay alert to the risks of AI, whilst not denying itself its advantages. The AI Sprint Committee, as a time-bound, transitional authority, effectively creates a safe space for innovation and careful experimentation.

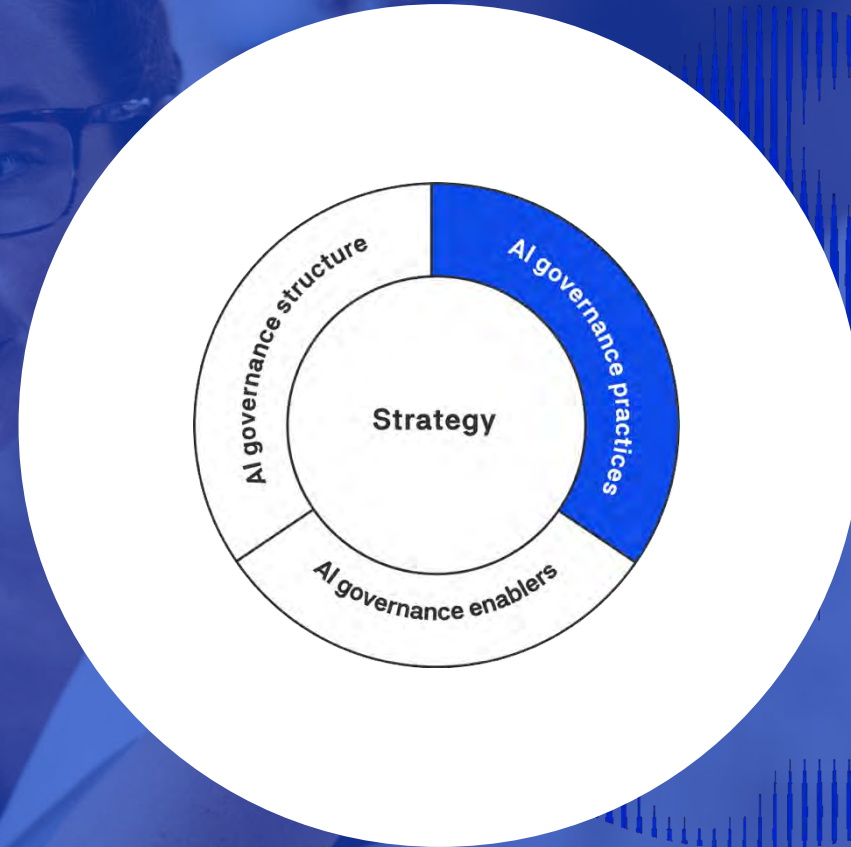


From a Board perspective, our role is to ensure that Canteen is both thoughtful and forward-looking in how it approaches AI. The AI Sprint Committee gives us a structured way to explore the technology, build the right governance foundations, and maintain clear oversight, while still enabling responsible innovation.

Hao Lu, Canteen Board Chair



AI Governance Practices





How is Canteen exercising sound AI governance, and how are they looking to build upon these practices?

Consistent with the Board's strategic direction and intent, Canteen is working to integrate AI governance and risk management into existing functions, rather than duplicating systems, practices, and processes. Canteen has built a strong foundation on the below areas, and is prioritising certain aspects to uplift over the coming months:

Risk management & reporting

Canteen has an existing Finance and Risk Committee and, consistent with this, applied its established risk management framework to assess the risks and required controls associated with the use of AI. As part of this process, a series of internal workshops were conducted to identify and map initial AI-related risks across all areas of the organisation. Through this work, the Board recognised the need to balance staying ahead of AI innovation, including the risk of missed opportunities, while maintaining a low risk appetite for high-risk or uncontrolled AI use, particularly where there is potential to impact safety, quality of care, trust, legal compliance, or alignment with Canteen's mission.

The proposed AI risk position was reviewed by the AI Sprint Committee and recommended to the Finance and Risk Committee, which endorsed the position for approval by the full Board as part of the organisation's strategic risk framework. The AI Sprint Committee provides quarterly updates to the Board on its activities, including how controls are operating in practice and any changes required to refine residual risk settings, controls, or other governance elements.





AI governance artefacts

The AI Sprint Committee will work to further develop and refine the governance artefacts for the appropriate use of AI within Canteen. The organisation already maintains clear identifications of permitted and prohibited uses, including restrictions on automated decision-making without meaningful human oversight, but the complete range of possible use cases, and their attendant conditions and controls, have yet to be identified. These will be documented, approved, and socialised through the established pathways used by the Committee.

Visibility, transparency, and privacy

Canteen has emphasised the importance of openness in both its internal and external use of AI. The organisation currently maintains an embedded AI inventory within its existing Internal Guidelines for AI Governance and Internal Usage, which is aligned with existing governance structures and practices, and provides a centralised source of truth for AI use across the organisation, accessible by staff. Additionally, the inventory identifies which AI tools are permitted to access systems containing personal information. It adopts a strict default position that no access to, or use of, personal information is allowed without explicit approval through defined governance processes. All approved tools are required to operate within secure, internally controlled environments and must meet enterprise-level data protection and security standards, ensuring that sensitive information remains protected and is not exposed to external systems.

Incident response

Canteen is acutely aware of the risks that AI can present towards children and young people. As such, any AI-related incident, such as a data breach, inappropriate output, or other harm, is covered by its Incident Management Policy and subordinate procedures. These documents address incidents in a sequential manner, consisting of identification and reporting, severity classification, escalation, and investigation, remediation, and debrief. These documents explicitly prioritise incidents involving children and young people, and ensure that serious or reportable incidents are escalated through the appropriate channels.



The AI Sprint Committee will coordinate these activities and more during its 12-month timeframe, after which these practices will be distilled into appropriate existing functions.



Governing an AI call summarisation tool

Canteen's early governance practices are reflected in its adoption of an AI platform designed to support the summarisation of incoming calls with families. The primary purpose of the tool is to reduce administrative burden and enable Cancer Navigators to focus more fully on their connection with families during and after each interaction.

This approach is also informing the development of an AI-enabled agent that can draw on previous case notes and organisational knowledge to support staff in identifying appropriate resources. This is particularly valuable in more complex scenarios, such as supporting families of children and young people impacted by cancer in remote locations or those with highly specific needs. The agent also supports the ongoing discovery and organisation of new resources, contributing to a continuously improving shared knowledge base across the organisation.

Importantly, these tools are designed to assist staff by structuring and surfacing information, not to make decisions about care, risk, or service response. Rather than scaling the platform immediately, Canteen worked to ensure the appropriate governance, clinical, and operational settings were in place. To this end, Canteen:

- **Adjusted the AI tool's technical configuration** to limit its creative freedom, prioritising the generation of factual, structured, and clinically appropriate information and the minimisation of hallucinations and stylised presentation.
- **Embedded clear human-in-the-loop processes** that required team members to review, validate, and edit summaries prior to being saved into clinical notes.
- **Reinforced individual responsibility for AI use** by explicitly recognising the role of AI as assistive, rather than as a tool that is completely authoritative.

AI Governance Enablers





How is Canteen enabling safe and responsible AI use?

Beyond structural improvements to its AI governance bodies and practices, Canteen is actively exploring the ways in which it can underpin its governance initiatives through investments in human capital and appropriate tooling. Canteen is also fostering its AI governance culture to be deliberate, sequential, and cautious to ensure that staff internalise and faithfully exercise responsible AI practices.

Canteen's governance enablement begins at the top, with its Board intentionally structured to reflect the community it serves. In line with its constitution, a majority of directors are Member Directors, being young people who have been impacted by cancer. This ensures that lived experience is embedded directly into governance and brings a grounded, real-world perspective to how the organisation approaches technology and related governance initiatives.

One key formal mechanism for stakeholder engagement with its community is its Youth Advisory Team (YAT), alongside other channels such as direct service feedback, surveys, and co-design activities. Canteen consulted with the YAT early in its AI adoption journey, which reported a large degree of support for its use to reduce administrative burden on staff as well as other areas of service provision. At the same time, the YAT wanted to see humans involved in key decision-making processes.



As a member-based organisation, consultation with young people is at the core of everything we do. That includes formal governance mechanisms, where young people engage at both a local and national level, including through our AGM, where they have a direct voice and vote on matters that are important to them. Our Board, led by directors with lived experience of cancer, reflects this commitment at the highest level. As management, our role is to execute on the strategy set by the Board through these established governance structures, and our approach to AI is no different.”

Raul Caceres, Executive Director of Operations and Executive Representative leading AI work





Alongside the AI Sprint Committee, Canteen has set up an **AI Working Group**, which is more adoption-oriented in nature, and brings together representatives from across the organisation to discuss issues, concerns, and learnings from how AI is tracking on the ground with Canteen staff.

Consistent with the first pillar of its AI strategy, Canteen is also engaged in a concerted effort to upskill and train its staff to exploit AI effectively. This largely owes to the disparity in AI fluency observed by some Canteen team members. Whereas some team members lack knowledge of fundamentals, including how AI works and how to effectively craft prompts, others are described as ‘super-users’, who seek innovative ways to integrate AI into their workload.

To address this gap, Canteen’s People and Culture team have identified a series of foundational training offerings intended to build baseline understanding and confidence and reinforce expectations around safe, ethical, and responsible AI use. This training program is not viewed as a one-off, but rather a progressive capability pathway to be iterated upon over time. It also includes a mandatory component focused on AI compliance in Australia, complemented by optional self-guided courses to build practical capability in the tools being implemented. Where relevant, team-specific tools are supported through more targeted and in-depth training.

Lastly, Canteen exercises a fairly high degree of technical oversight into the AI tools it uses – taking advantage of both commonly available generative AI platforms as well as bespoke tools, such as an internal employee self-service agent and a chatbot trained on Canteen’s internal documentation and impact data. Canteen embraces a safety-by-design approach to technical deployment, building in protections into this infrastructure from day zero, rather than being retrofitted later.



What's next for Canteen?

Canteen will make use of HTI's AI Governance Operating Model over the course of the AI Sprint Committee's 12-month lifecycle to exercise governance, pursue related initiatives, and generate resulting artefacts.

Upon completion of the 12-month sprint, HTI will produce another case study to mark Canteen's journey to-date. This will track how Canteen has refined their governance structures, practices, and enablers to reflect the evolving capabilities of AI and its associated risks, while capitalising on the opportunities the technology offers.



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Human Technology Institute

For more information on HTI's not-for-profit sector work or the AI Corporate Governance Program, please contact:

Llewellyn Spink
AI Corporate Governance Lead
llewellyn.spink@uts.edu.au

Jack Goldsmith
AI Corporate Governance Specialist
Jack.goldsmith@uts.edu.au

For questions relating to the Canteen case study, please contact:

Myfanwy Wallwork
Head, AI Governance Learning and Development
myfanwy.wallwork@uts.edu.au

Jack Goldsmith
AI Corporate Governance Specialist
Jack.goldsmith@uts.edu.au