WEEKLY · WEDNESDAYS
Positive, practical intelligence for Queensland

Northern Intelligence

ISSUE 1
aussiegrid.au

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Positive, practical intelligence for Queensland

FROM THE FOUNDER

Why we started

A plain-English, no-doom weekly on what AI means for Queensland homes and businesses.

BY BEN JAKEMAN · AUSSIE GRID, MACKAY

YO YO YO!

Welcome to Issue 1 of Northern Intelligence.

So why a newsletter? Simple. I want to help Queenslanders, everyday residents and business owners alike, understand what AI actually is and what it means for us. No mainstream-media spin. No doom. Just the facts, in plain English for us normal humans, plus practical ways to use it every day to make life a bit better.

The style comes from my favourite podcast, Moonshots with Peter Diamandis. It's data-driven and optimistic, and it focuses on what's possible.

> ***"No mainstream-media spin. No doom. Just the facts, in plain English for us normal humans."***
>
> BEN JAKEMAN

A bit about me: I'm a sparky with an abundance mindset. I taught myself to code, then found AI, the biggest efficiency multiplier I've ever come across. Now I run an AI-native business, a one-man band with AI employees, built to improve the lives of the people around me.

So let's go on a positive journey together over the coming weeks, months and years. Bring an open mind. The Japanese call it *shoshin*, or 'beginner's mind.' Lean into it!

Gratitude,
Ben Jakeman 🙏
AUSSIE GRID, MACKAY

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1 What's getting better, and how to use it

ChatGPT now builds you a tool, not just an answer

GPT-6's "Intelligent UI" turns replies into charts, forms and working calculators.

Ask a question, get a wall of text? Not any more. OpenAI's GPT-6, launched 7 October, adds "Intelligent UI": replies can include charts, tappable buttons, forms and small tools you use right in the chat. OpenAI says over 1.2 billion people use ChatGPT weekly; paid tiers got it first, Free and Go tiers from the next day.

Try it (10 min): "Build me a quote calculator: labour rate, hours, materials, 10% GST." Test it on a job you've already quoted, and check the maths by hand once!

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
A custom quote or cash-flow tool in minutes, with no developer and no spreadsheet wrangling.

Source: openai.com

2 Try this week

Meet Grok Bot (and the one plan that covers Grok + Cursor)

Most AI tools give you a chat box: you ask, it answers, and you still do the work. **Grok Bot** is different. It's an AI teammate you message from your computer or phone, and it works on its own cloud computer, with a browser and files. It can research, draft, and work through real tasks inside the websites and apps you already use, and it checks with you before anything important goes out. You can show it a job once and it saves that as a routine to run next time. It keeps working while your laptop is closed, which is handy if you're on the tools all day and doing the admin at 9 pm.

The other big news this month is that Grok, Grok Bot and Cursor now come under **one subscription**, called The X Subscription. That's one bill instead of three. Grok Bot starts on the Premium plan. Cursor is the tool for people who want to build their own software or apps. If that's not you yet, you can ignore that bit.

How good is the value? xAI says Premium includes "the benefits of SuperGrok, Cursor Pro, and X Premium+, previously $90/month combined" (that's US$90, by xAI's own count).

THE X SUBSCRIPTION: ONE PLAN FOR GROK, GROK BOT AND CURSOR

PLAN	PRICE (USD)	APPROX. AUD*	BEST FOR	WHAT YOU GET
Free	$0	$0	Having a first go	Limited Grok chat and image generation, a starter allowance for Cursor's coding agent, standard X
Plus	$8/mo or $80/yr	~$12/mo or ~$115/yr	Light, casual use	More Grok usage (Chat, Voice, Imagine, Build), Cursor with Grok models, X checkmark and fewer ads. **No Grok Bot**
Premium ⭐	$30/mo or $300/yr	~$43/mo or ~$432/yr	Most small business owners starting with AI	**Grok Bot**, latest Grok models, 4x Plus usage, image and video generation, full Cursor (cloud agents, AI code reviews), X Premium perks
Super	$100/mo or $1,000/yr	~$144/mo or ~$1,440/yr	People using AI agents every day	Everything in Premium, 15x Plus usage, priority access at busy times
Ultra	$200/mo or $2,000/yr	~$288/mo or ~$2,880/yr	Power users and builders	Everything in Super, 50x Plus usage, earliest access to new products and models
Teams	From $30/seat/mo	~$43/seat/mo	Small teams sharing tools	Premium, Super or Ultra seats (you can mix them), one bill, admin and usage dashboards

*Approx. AUD at 1 USD = 1.44 AUD (open.er-api.com, 18 Oct 2026). Prices exclude GST and other taxes. Usage is a shared allowance across Grok, Grok Bot and Cursor that refreshes weekly. Using third-party (non-Grok) AI models inside Cursor costs extra.

Already on SuperGrok, Cursor or X Premium? Nothing changes unless you want it to. Your current plan keeps running and switching is optional. If you do switch, xAI says you get a prorated refund for the unused time on your old plan. (Paying for Cursor through the Apple App Store? Cancel that one in your iPhone settings and ask Apple about any refund.)

Try this *(free, about 10 minutes)*

Open **grok.com** or the Grok app on the free plan and paste in something that's been sitting in your inbox, like a supplier quote, a council letter or a long customer email. Ask: *"Summarise this in three dot points, tell me what I need to do and by when, then draft a short, friendly reply."* Check the reply, tweak it so it sounds like you, and send it yourself. If you catch yourself doing that every day, that's the job to hand to a Grok Bot later.

Prices as listed on 18 October 2026, in USD unless noted. Check the provider's site before buying. Sources: x.ai/pricing · The X Subscription pricing docs (annual prices) · Introducing The X Subscription · Grok Bot · Grok Bot on The X Subscription · Grok Bot overview · cursor.com/pricing

We use Grok Bot to help put this newsletter together.

3 Entrepreneurs' Corner

AUSTRALIA · MACKAY

From Mackay apprentice to global mining tech

An "accidental inventor" turned a Bowen Basin headache into a worldwide product.

Corey Vaughan started as an apprentice at Max Engineering in Mackay. Two decades in the Bowen Basin later, a worn pipe failed and discharged material for hours before anyone noticed. A site manager asked: could we know before it fails? Corey found "a lot of measuring, but not a lot of monitoring." So his team built 2CENSOR, patented wear-monitoring sensors now used across the Americas, Africa and Asia-Pacific. "It wasn't that we invented a sensor and hoped it worked. It was a calculated risk."

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
The best ideas come from problems you deal with on site every day. Our region is full of them!

Source: Greater Whitsunday Alliance

OVERSEAS · SEATTLE

One founder, no co-founder, AI does the heavy lifting

A 25-year-old left a US$200K job and built his startup solo.

Junead Khan quit Microsoft to build Treasury, an "AI money coach" for people who can't afford a financial adviser. No co-founder, no venture capital. He says Claude Code and Codex let him "code so much faster", so going solo felt achievable. He shared the highs and lows on social media to build an audience. Treasury now has paying customers and over US$6,000 in revenue. Early days, and he's honest he lives off savings. His lesson: "sometimes the only permission you need is your own."

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
AI makes the one-person business real. Start small, share the journey, test with real customers.

Source: Business Insider, 11 Oct

4 Australian Intelligence Business highlight

PROSERPINE · AGTECH

Proserpine teen teaches drones to muster cattle

Brumby (formerly GrazeMate) moves the mob from a phone, no pilot needed.

Sam Rogers grew up on Breadalbane Plains near Proserpine. Mustering by drone was "burning so much time", so he built AI models, with low-stress stockmanship experts, that teach off-the-shelf drones to move cattle themselves. Tap the paddock they're in, tap where they're going, press start. He raised $1.2 million, with Y Combinator as main investor, and is trialling in the US, where self-flying drone rules are more open. Now renamed Brumby, it's also working on weighing cattle and measuring grass from the air.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
A North Queensland kid solving a North Queensland problem, aiming to bring it home once it's proven safe.

Source: Queensland Country Life · Y Combinator

5 Using intelligence in your home

Make your own household tools, just by asking

No apps to download. Describe the tool and ChatGPT builds it.

OpenAI says GPT-6 can build a tool for the task at hand, like a savings calculator or a bill splitter, or lay out a roast timeline next to the recipe. Three to try tonight:

1. **Bill splitter:** "Split power, internet and groceries for 4 people."
2. **Savings goal:** "Show how $50 a week grows to a $3,000 holiday."
3. **Roast planner:** "Roast for 6, eating at 6 pm, with a timeline."

Keep bank, Medicare and TFN details out of the chat.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
Family admin sorted in minutes, so you get more time back for the good stuff.

Source: openai.com

6 Moonshots highlight

Fusion hits 12 million degrees, no super-magnets

General Fusion's LM26 passes a key 1 keV milestone.

On 8 October, Canada's General Fusion said LM26 heated plasma beyond 1 keV, about 12.6 million °C, measured with the UK Atomic Energy Authority. It squeezes plasma with a metal wall, not giant lasers or superconducting magnets. Honest bit: the papers are submitted for peer review, not yet reviewed. Next stop 10 keV; first plant aimed for around 2035.

🎧 **Listen:** Moonshots #303 (17 Oct): falling robot-brain costs and how prizes drive breakthroughs, with XPRIZE CEO Anousheh Ansari.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
Simpler fusion could one day mean abundant clean baseload power. Long game, real progress.

Source: generalfusion.com

7 Why data centres are net positive

Big sheds, bigger ripple effect

Jobs, local suppliers and a home for spare midday solar, with honest caveats.

Oxford Economics forecasts data-centre investment here jumping from under $10b a year (2025) to over $60b by 2030. Its modelling: $65.7b to GDP and about 353,000 job-years over FY26–30, ~65% in supplier businesses, regional included. Catch: only ~35–38% of spend stays onshore.

The government's CEFC says steady daytime demand could soak up solar that would be wasted, though evening peaks still lean on coal and gas.

Water: an *industry-commissioned* report puts use at ~0.04% of Australia's water, but Sydney Water forecasts 15–20% of Sydney's supply by 2035. Small nationally; plan locally.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
Done right, data centres mean work for local trades and suppliers. Planning power and water is the key.

Source: Oxford Economics · CEFC · DCA/Mandala · WSAA

8 Aussie Grid story

Our solar app is out in the wild!

A few Mackay homes are road-testing it. Early days, but they're loving it.

So, where are we at? Aussie Grid's solar optimisation app is LIVE in beta, running in a handful of local homes right now.

The feedback so far? Great. Real households, real systems, real data.

But let's be honest. This is a long road. Energy is a regulated space, with plenty of hoops to jump through, and we're doing it properly.

What's next: we're signing up a few more volunteer houses, then applying for our 90-day pilot.

Want to see it? Check out the app at aussiegrid.au/solar. And you'll hear what's next here first.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US
Homegrown tech, built in Mackay, tested by locals before it goes anywhere else.

More: aussiegrid.au/solar

9 Overseas stories from major labs

ANTHROPIC

AI redesigns quantum circuits, and beats the experts

Claude found leaner designs for eight quantum building blocks.

Anthropic (16 Oct) gave Claude plain-English specs for eight quantum circuits, plus a program that checks each design. Working largely on its own, Claude beat the best published designs on all eight. One uses 17x fewer gates for 12% more qubits.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
Useful quantum computers, for better batteries, medicines and fertiliser, could arrive sooner.

Source: anthropic.com

GOOGLE

"No one should be surprised by a natural disaster"

Google's AI now gives up to 15 days' cyclone warning.

Google (15 Oct) says its WeatherNext AI can predict cyclones up to 15 days out, and its flood forecasts give up to seven days' notice of river floods for 2 billion+ people in 150 countries.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
In cyclone country, more warning means more time to prep the house, the boat and the business.

Source: blog.google

10 Tech, Science, Engineering & Maths

TECH

The AI phone voice that actually fixes things

Grok Voice 3.0 ranks #1 for speech-to-speech AI, at less than a coffee an hour.

So, can an AI really take a phone call? xAI's Grok Voice 3.0, out 14 October, tops Artificial Analysis's independent Speech-to-Speech Index (86.9). At Starlink it answers 20,000 calls a day, and roughly 70% are sorted with no human involved. It checks who you are, troubleshoots gear and ships replacements. For builders, it costs US$0.08 a minute through xAI's API, about US$4.80 an hour.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
After-hours phone answering that once needed a call centre is now within reach of a one-ute business.

Source: x.ai

SCIENCE

AI helps find a new antibiotic lead

An early-stage find, but a faster way to search for new medicines.

Superbugs are a real worry: drug resistance could cause an estimated 10 million deaths a year by 2050. Google DeepMind scientists, working with an AI agent, sifted millions of unstudied proteins and found a 97-amino-acid peptide that may fight bacteria behind chest infections. Be clear: it's a lead, not a cure. It's now in wet-lab testing with several others. The big win is speed. Days of database work became one session.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
Quicker searches mean new antibiotics could reach our hospitals, regional ones included, sooner.

Source: deepmind.google

ENGINEERING

Eyes beneath the surface off Gladstone

CQ researchers trial a robot camera that sees seagrass in murky water.

How do you check seagrass when you can't see your hand underwater? CQUniversity, CSIRO and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation are trialling a CSIRO-built towed camera off Gladstone. A small uncrewed boat tows it just above the seabed, and AI analyses the images on board. Seagrass feeds turtles and dugongs, cleans water and stores carbon. Early results look promising; a final report is due later this year.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
Homegrown CQ tech that could make Reef restoration cheaper, safer and bigger.

Source: csiro.au

MATHS

AI cracks maths puzzles open for 56 years

And a computer checked every single step.

Google DeepMind's AlphaProof Nexus has solved 9 of 353 open Erdős problems, two of them open for 56 years. It also proved 44 of 492 open conjectures from the Online Encyclopedia of Integer Sequences. The key? Every proof is written in Lean, a language where the computer checks each step. No "trust me, bro." Published in the journal *Science* on 8 October.

WHY IT MATTERS TO US:
The same machine-checked maths helps make the software and engineering we rely on every day more trustworthy.

Source: science.org

11 The Good Data: myth vs data

THE MYTH

"Renewables wreck the grid and push up prices."

The latest numbers from the grid operator tell a different story.

THE HONEST BALANCE

These are **wholesale** prices, not your power bill. And WA runs a separate market, where prices rose 30% to $118/MWh after lower wind and coal output pushed up gas use.

THE DATA · AEMO, APR–JUN 2026

42.1%

of power in the National Electricity Market came from renewables. A record, up from 37.1% a year earlier.

- ✓ Average wholesale prices fell 47% to $74/MWh, the lowest June quarter since 2020. Queensland: down 44% to $67/MWh.
- ✓ Grid-scale batteries more than doubled in a year, to over 9 GW.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

More clean power and big batteries are making the grid more competitive, not less. Worth knowing next time someone tells you otherwise!

Source: AEMO Quarterly Energy Dynamics Q2 2026, media release 28 July 2026.

12 Stay Safe

One password to remember. Let the vault do the rest.

Small, free habits that keep your accounts and your business running smoothly.

So, quick question. How many of your passwords are the same word with a "1!" on the end? Guilty, once upon a time!

Here's the good news. Fixing it is simple, and most of it is free.

I use Bitdefender myself, especially the password vault. This isn't a paid plug.

WHAT IT DOES, IN PLAIN WORDS

Bitdefender's password vault is now called **SecurePass**. You remember one master password and it handles the rest:

- ✓ Creates a strong, unique password for every new account in one click
- ✓ Saves it, then fills it in for you next time
- ✓ Syncs across Windows, Mac, iPhone and Android
- ✓ Flags weak, reused or leaked passwords so you know what to fix first

Your vault is end-to-end encrypted. SecurePass comes on its own (with a 30-day free trial) or bundled in Bitdefender's Total, Premium and Ultimate Security plans.

Try this week *(about 30 minutes)*

1. **Move your top 5 accounts into a password manager:** email, banking, myGov, social media and the one your business runs on. Swap each for a fresh generated password.
2. **Turn on MFA for those same 5.** The ACSC calls it "one of the most effective ways to protect your accounts from cybercriminals." No MFA option? Use a passphrase of four or more random words, at least 15 characters.
3. **Switch on automatic updates** on your phone and laptop.
4. **Back up** your photos and business files, and keep one copy offline.
5. **Dodgy text or email?** Paste it into Bitdefender's free Scamio checker before you click. Scamwatch puts it in three words: *Stop. Check. Protect.*

One habit at a time. Small steps, big peace of mind.

Checked 18 October 2026. Sources: Bitdefender SecurePass · Bitdefender Scamio · ACSC: Personal cyber security first steps · ACSC: Easy steps to secure yourself online · ACSC: How to back up · Scamwatch: Stop. Check. Protect.

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Northern Intelligence is free, weekly and built for Queensland. No spin. No doom. Just practical intelligence you can use. Know someone who'd like it? Pass it on!

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Gratitude, Ben 🙏

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