

Correspondence

AI models: one country's fears become everyone's constraint

On 12 June, the United States suspended access to two 'frontier' artificial-intelligence models for every foreign national, anywhere in the world, citing national security risks. Their developer, Anthropic, acknowledged that it had identified "a small number of previously known, minor vulnerabilities", complied and switched the models off for all users within three days of their release.

The models have since been reviewed and switched back on. But I interpret this episode as another example of the silent 'capture' of foreign researchers. It exposes how a growing share of research capacity reaches us through infrastructure we neither own nor can replace: frontier models, the computational power underlying them and the data sets they are trained on. That infrastructure sits inside particular jurisdictions, beyond most people's reach.

Earlier examples include US semiconductor export controls in 2022 and Dutch restrictions on exports of lithographic chip-making equipment in 2023. Each step pulls more of the scientific enterprise under governments' discretion.

The research system should not be this exposed. Resilience requires that core capabilities be substitutable and held across more than one jurisdiction, not consolidated such that a single directive can revoke them overnight.

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Protect Australian species from bird flu virus

In June, highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 was detected in Australia for the first time, in birds in a remote region in the west of the country. It is unknown whether the virus has spread to other wildlife. So far, livestock seem unaffected. But H5N1 is starting to be detected across the country, and its impact on the many endemic and increasingly imperilled species could be substantial (S. Ryding *et al. Austral Ecol.* 50, e70048; 2025).

Bird species of great conservation concern include the critically endangered orange-bellied parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*) and regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*). Aquatic mammals, such as the platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) and rakali (*Hydromys chrysogaster*), a native rodent, might be affected through transmission from water birds. Dingoes, quolls, bandicoots and other species that scavenge dead animals risk infection from carcasses. Many of the nation's endangered mammals, including the Australian sea lion (*Neophoca cinerea*) and the Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*), are potentially exposed.

The country must be vigilant, not alarmed. We call on government, industry and communities to increase efforts and work together to protect the continent's species and ecosystems in the face of this unfolding threat.

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The normalization of doping is a public-health concern

April Henning's recent World view on the Enhanced Games raises concerns regarding athlete representation, socio-economic vulnerability, mental health and the limitations of anti-doping systems (see *Nature* 653, 651; 2026). And Kim Wolff's World View shows the risks to athletes' health and integrity (see *Nature* 653, 652; 2026). A further, broad consequence is the normalization of pharmacological enhancement.

The use of performance-enhancing substances, particularly anabolic-androgenic steroids, extends far beyond elite sports. Amateur and recreational athletes can emulate these practices.

Initiatives such as the Enhanced Games risk reinforcing the misconception that the main barrier to doping is institutional prohibition rather than clinical risks. Decades of clinical evidence have associated the use of these steroids with multiple severe health complications. The fact that a substance is approved by the US Food and Drug Administration does not mean that it can be used safely, often at high doses, for performance enhancement.

Framing pharmacological enhancement as entertainment shifts the focus of sport away from athletic achievement and towards the commercialization of extreme bodily risk.

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Academia must value community partnerships

Efforts to reform research assessment are on the rise. Beyond publications and citations, research should be evaluated by its quality, integrity and societal contribution. Yet one dimension remains relatively under-recognized: the importance of sustained community partnerships. Universities are often asked to demonstrate societal impact, but assessment systems emphasize scholarly outputs.

Community partnerships can transform scholarship into societal impact. In these reciprocal relationships, universities and community organizations co-design solutions through complementary expertise, as well as mobilize resources and share accountability for addressing complex societal challenges. Research is refined by local knowledge, adapted to community contexts and sustained beyond individual projects. Publications communicate discovery; partnerships determine whether discovery changes lives.

If societal impact is to become a defining expectation of publicly funded research, scientific assessment should also recognize the community partnerships that make such impacts possible.

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