THINK · BEFORE YOU ASK

Before you paste: what to keep out of AI.

Whatever you type or upload goes to the company that runs the tool. Most of the time you can get exactly the same help without the private bits.

Ask yourself two things

1. **Does the tool need this detail to help me?** Usually not: describing the situation gets you the same help.
2. **If this ended up somewhere public, who could be hurt?** If anyone could, you included, leave it out or describe it generally.

Keep these out

Australia's privacy regulator, the OAIC, recommends as best practice that organisations don't enter personal information, and particularly sensitive information, into publicly available generative AI tools. It's a good rule at home too. Yours, and other people's:

- Passwords, PINs and one-time codes
- Bank, card and superannuation details
- Tax file, Medicare, licence or passport numbers
- Health and other sensitive details (religion, sexuality, politics, ethnicity, criminal record)
- Other people's private messages, photos or details, without their OK
- Children's names, schools, photos or locations
- Work or client information your workplace hasn't approved for that tool
- Culturally restricted knowledge, unless the right people have agreed

Swap the specifics for a description

INSTEAD OF THIS (MADE UP)	ASK THIS
My neighbour Sarah Chen at 14 Banksia Street owes me $340 for our half of the fence and hasn't replied to three texts. Write her a firm message.	A neighbour owes me money for our half of a shared fence and hasn't replied to a few messages. Write a polite but firm text I can personalise.

Taking out the name isn't enough on its own: an address, an amount and a story can still point to one person. Add the real details yourself afterwards.

Check the tool, too. Look in its settings for chat history and whether your chats can be used for training. At work or school, use the approved tool. Settings help, but they don't make private information safe to share.

> **Already pasted something you shouldn't have?**
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> Delete the chat, though that may not remove every copy. Change a password you shared, call your bank on its official number about card details, and tell your workplace about work information. IDCARE can help if identity documents are involved.

Sources Checked against these sources on 11 October 2026. OAIC: privacy and commercially available AI products ↗OAIC: what personal and sensitive information are ↗