Not Even Garbage

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SUMMARY

There are a couple of phrases that are relevant to the theme of applying Artificial Intelligence to contexts in general, and to we valuers engaging AI to assist in delivering transparent and accountable fiscal cadastres in particular.

The first, "not even wrong", describes an argument or explanation that may at first seem scientific but is based on unfalsifiable premises or is itself unfalsifiable and, thereby, unscientific. The second, "garbage in, garbage out" (GIGO) refers to a problem with merely mechanical thinking, be it from genuine or artificial intelligence. In such contexts, answering a question that is based on false premises will automatically provide false answers, even if its internal logic is irrefutable. Moreover, if a question open to various interpretations, its answers will also be open to error.

This paper in premised upon the view that the potential application of artificial intelligence to mass assessments holds great promise for benefit of all affected parties if the above is both kept front of mind throughout the whole process and competently monitored and evaluated, and great danger of the ruination of that promise if it is not.

A further premise is that while the requirements of the market value definition correctly exclude solely mechanical "valuations", in open transparent and developed markets where information is plentiful and competently vetted, mechanical valuations have an already proven fitness for purpose. AI will probably further refine the accuracy in such markets, but the most significant need globally is in closed, opaque and unaccountable markets such as those in many megacities.

In such places, there may be little data, no sufficiently reliable information derivable from it, so in turn no firm knowledge derivable from that, and hence no intrinsically valuable understanding by

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relevant assessing officers. Combining such circumstances with the "black box" nature of AI, even with the best will in the world from a scientific perspective the results may be "not even garbage".

It is in such environments where both the greatest dangers and opportunities lie, and this paper attempts to constructively examine that context with a view towards ultimately developing protocols towards determining the best that can be done at the relevant time and place, thereby developing from "not even garbage" if unthinkingly applied, towards involving, monitoring and evaluating AI as a means of optimising good governance in domains where that is most urgently required.