



DLPA Insights Report  
August 2026



## Artificial Intelligence In The Workplace

---

### **Objective:**

To measure how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing workplace behaviour, communication, critical thinking and decision making among Australian leaders and workers.

### **Timings:**

11th - 14th August, 2026

### **Total sample:**

1,008 Australian business leaders and workers, as collected on the Pureprofile research panel.

### **Data parameters:**

Nationally representative of age, gender and location according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics census data.

### **Reporting:**

Audience segments call-out are statistically significant at 95% confidence level.

# Report Contents

1. **Topline Summary**
2. **Study Profile**
3. **The New Australian Workforce**
4. **AI & Workplace Communication**
5. **AI & Workplace Recruitment**
6. **AI Governance & Training**
7. **AI & Career Progression**
8. **Appendix**

# 1. Topline Summary

---

Key insights on AI and the Australian Workforce.

# Topline Summary

(1 of 3)

## **Senior leaders and managers are driving AI usage forward in workplaces across the nation**

- Senior leaders and those who manage others in their organisation are using AI at higher rates for everyday tasks (+20% pts and +8% pts vs. total workforce). By comparison, individual team members, sole traders and remote workers are 'dragging their feet', being slower to adopt AI into their work stream.

## **While AI adoption is highest among today's leaders, this is also bringing a quiet reliance on these tools to allow them to perform**

- Senior leaders are just as likely to query AI (20%) in the first instance, as they would be to ask a colleague (21%) or manager (21%) for guidance- the only workplace cohort to claim this.
- Additionally, 24% of senior leaders are uncertain or unconfident they could perform their job if AI became unavailable (+9% pts vs. total workforce who use AI)- further illustrating leadership's reliance on these tools.

## **Half (51%) of the Australian workforce believe AI has supercharged their ability to think critically- but not all are convinced**

- While senior leaders outpace the total workforce in the belief that AI has significantly improved their ability to think critically (+10% pts vs. total workforce), it's female workers who feel they are regressing thanks to AI. In particular, this cohort measures +4% pts higher than the total workforce when it comes to feeling their ability to think critically has weakened.

## **Despite AI's perceived benefits to workers' ability to think critically, 45% of the nation's workforce believe AI has made today's workers less capable overall**

- This is particularly driven by team members and those who work in large 500+ people organisations, both holding a higher sentiment that AI is making today's workers less capable on the whole (+7% points respectively vs. total workforce).

# Topline Summary

(2 of 3)

## **AI plays an active role in how workers communicate with each other, with 82% of the nation's workforce who use AI using it for comms related tasks**

- Half (49%) of Australian workers (who use AI) claim to use AI to help them write emails, 3 in 10 (29%) for help with presentations, and 1 in 4 (25%) when working through meetings.

## **Not all Australian workers are aware that workplace communications are created with the assistance of AI, with the majority preferring communications created solely by leaders**

- Over 1 in 3 (35%) of Australians who work as part of a team (non sole traders) believe their workplace communications are rarely or never created with the assistance of AI, evidence AI is quietly infiltrating workplace dialogue.
- This comes as the majority (47%) of those who work as part of a team (non sole traders) saying they trust AI-generated workplace communications less compared to those formulated solely by their leaders.

## **AI is leading your performance reviews**

- While 1 in 4 (25%) of senior managers and managers are using AI for performance reviews, only 9% of the workforce are entirely comfortable with their manager doing so.

## **The future is humans**

- Despite the uptick in AI usage across businesses, well over the majority (84%) of the nation's workforce want to be managed by a human although 76% of those currently working in an organisation (non sole trader) believing AI can be used in people management decision to varying degrees.

# Topline Summary

(3 of 3)

## **Senior leaders are sidestepping internal AI policies to get the job done**

- 43% of senior managers say their organisation has an AI policy, 67% feel confident that they understand the privacy and security risks, and 2 in 3 (66%) feel their organisation has provided enough guidance on how AI should be used.
- Despite all the pre-warnings, 1 in 4 (25%) of senior management continue to use AI tools that are not endorsed by the businesses they work in; some +8 % points higher than their counterparts.

## **While a sizeable proportion of the Australian workforce are not concerned about AI replacing roles, working females think otherwise**

- Almost half (45%) of the Australian workforce is not concerned that AI may replace aspects of their role.
- Despite this, 4 in 10 working females carrying significant concerns that AI will replace components of their day-to-day role, with 17% believing roles in their field will be eliminated within the next 5 years.

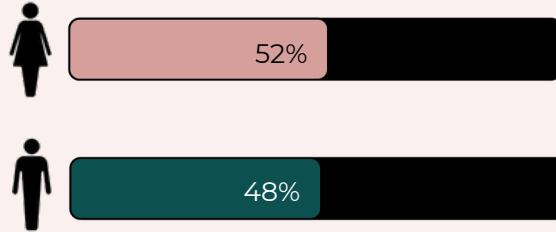
## 2. Study Profile

---

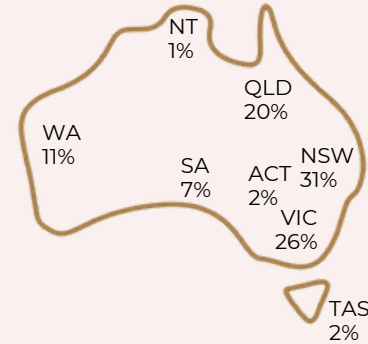
A demographic profile of Australian leaders and workers who completed the study.

# Study Profile- The Australian Workforce

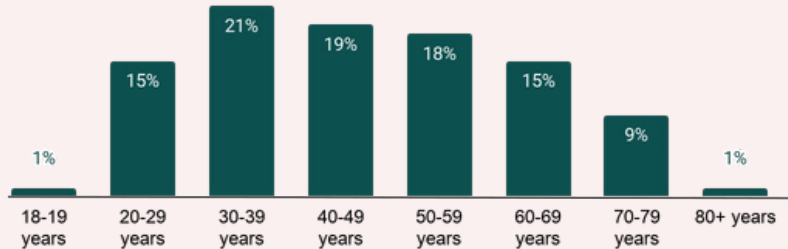
## Identity



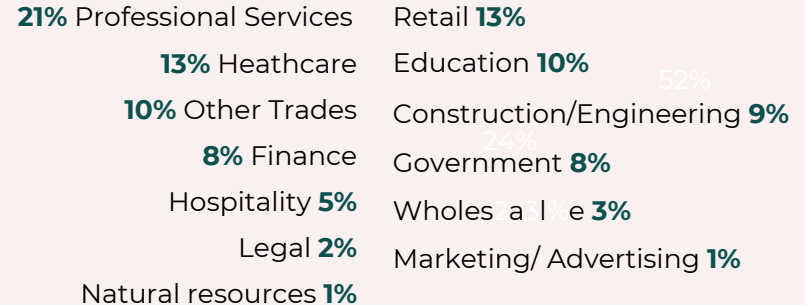
## Location



## Age

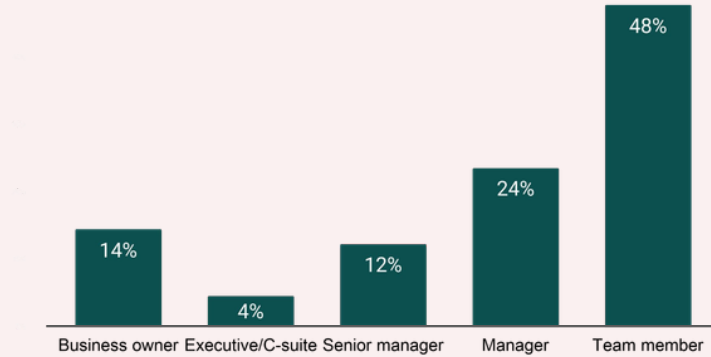


## Industry/Industries Employed In

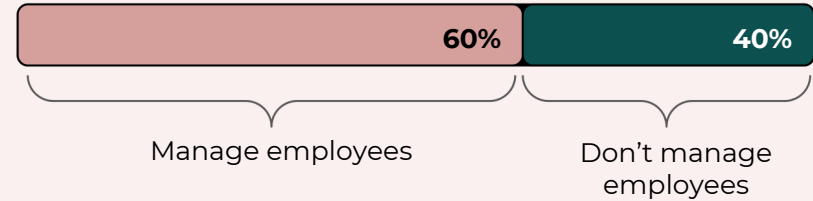


# Study Profile- The Australian Workforce

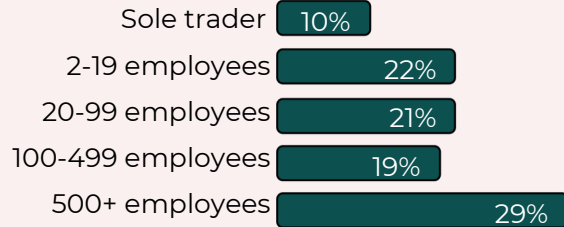
## Current Employment Level



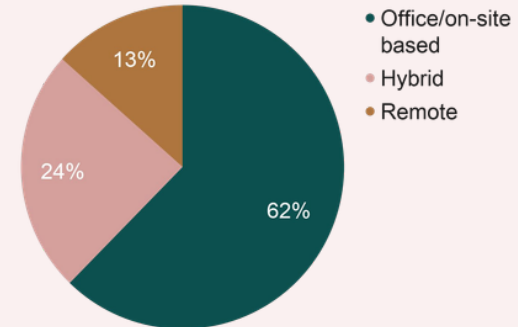
## Whether Manage Workers In Workplace



## Size of Business



## Location Work From



Q) What is your current employment level/s? Select all that apply. Q) What size is the business you run or are employed in? Select one option. Q) Do you manage people in at least one of these roles? Select one option. Q) Which location do you work from/in? Select one option. Base: Australian Leaders & Workers N=1,008. Note rounding error above.

# 3. The New Australian Workforce

---

Insights into AI usage across Australia's workforce.

# Senior leaders are the driving force behind AI usage, outpacing the Australian workforce when it comes to adopting AI at work.

## Using AI to complete work related tasks

Base: Total Workforce

How often do you use AI to complete work related tasks?

100%

80%

60%

40%

20%

0%

100%

80%

60%

40%

20%

0%

100%

80%

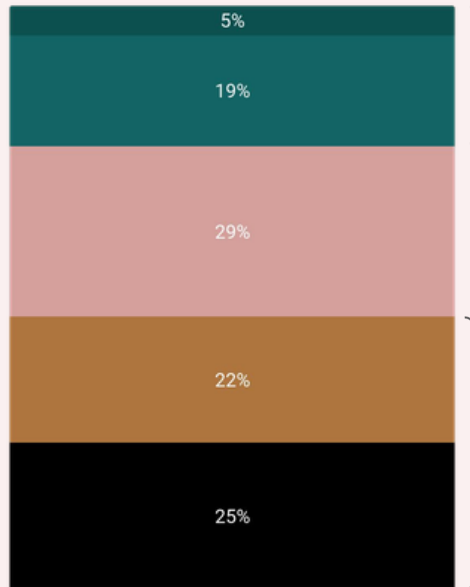
60%

40%

20%

0%

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never



**24%**  
Total: Frequent  
use of AI at work

**47%**  
Total: Infrequent or  
no use of AI at work

Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **senior leaders** (+20% pts), those who **manage employees** (+8% pts) and those who have a **hybrid office/remote role** (+9% pts) have the highest adoption of AI usage at work.

By comparison, **individual team members** (+12% pts), those who **don't manage employees** (+19% pts), **sole traders** (+15% pts), and who are **remote based** (+18% pts) have been slower to adopt AI into their work compared to the national average.

# Senior leaders are getting the most out of AI, using AI to improve the quality of their work (+12% pts), reduce workload (+9% pts), and improve their overall confidence (+8% pts).

## Workplace AI Usage

Base: Use AI at work

|                                      | Total Workforce | Senior leader | Manage employees | Hybrid office/remote role |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Save time                            | 47%             | 47%           | 50%              | 50%                       |
| Improve writing                      | 36%             | 41%           | 38%              | 37%                       |
| Generate ideas                       | 33%             | 30%           | 35%              | 34%                       |
| Improve quality of work              | 31%             | 43%           | 34%              | 37%                       |
| Reduce workload                      | 26%             | 35%           | 28%              | 30%                       |
| Help with tasks I'm unsure how to do | 26%             | 24%           | 26%              | 24%                       |
| Improve confidence                   | 14%             | 22%           | 17%              | 15%                       |
| Meet workplace expectations          | 12%             | 19%           | 15%              | 14%                       |
| Avoid difficult conversations        | 11%             | 15%           | 12%              | 12%                       |
| Other                                | 5%              | 3%            | 3%               | 4%                        |

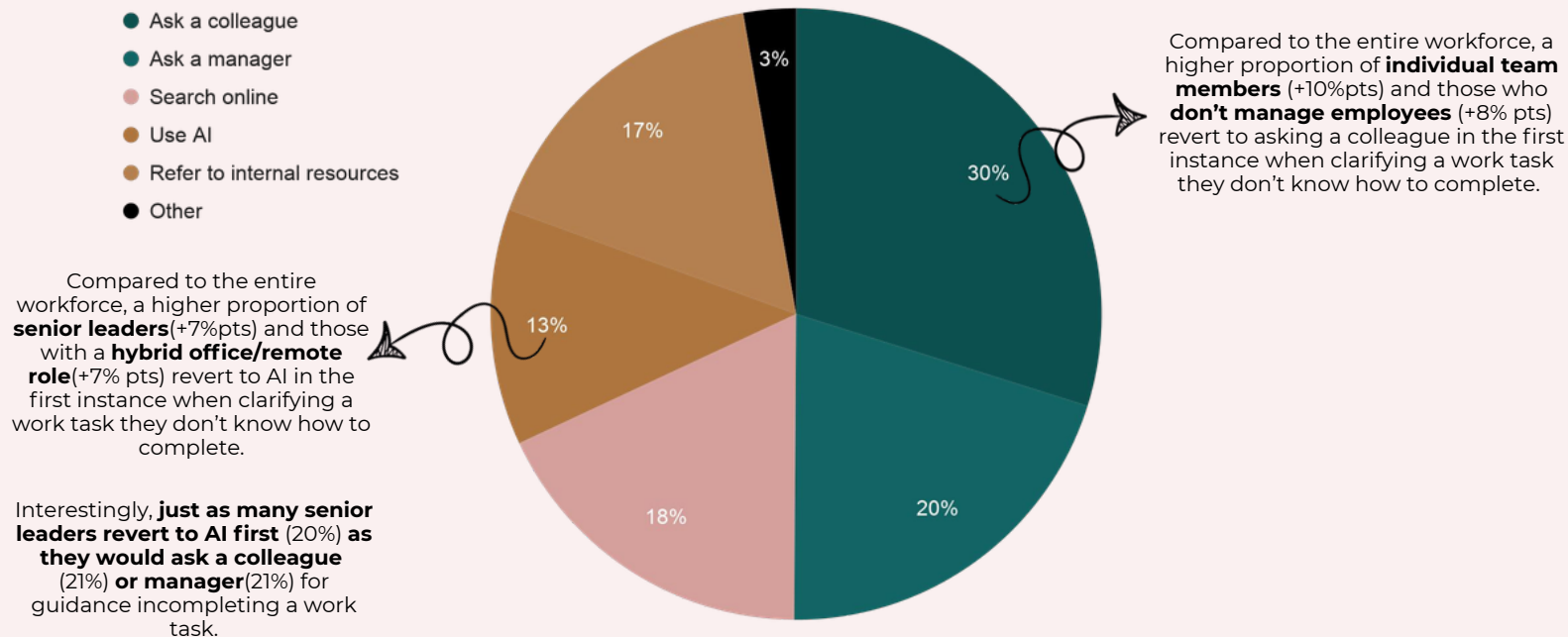
Q) Why do you most often use AI at work? Select all that most apply to you. Base: Australian Leaders & Workers who use AI at work, N=754.

# The Australian workforce still revert to another team member to clarify a task.

Despite this, senior leaders and those in hybrid roles are outpacing the workforce, with 1 in 5 querying an AI model in the first instance.

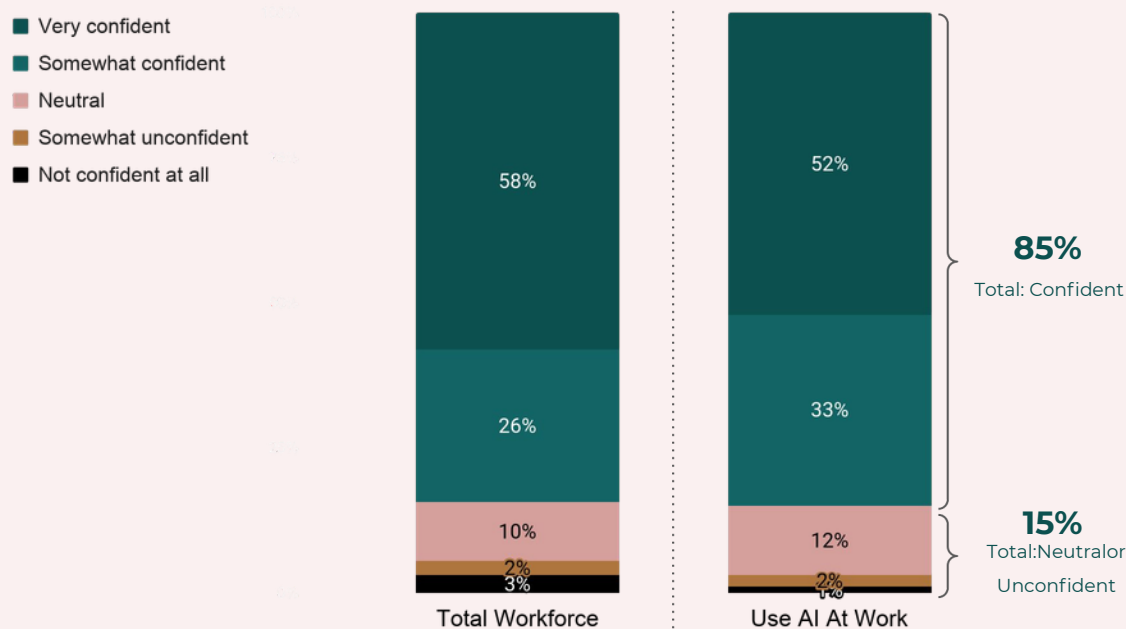
## Problem-Solving In The Workplace

Base: Total Workforce



# AI is quietly eroding leaders' and workers' confidence to perform roles,

## Reliance Of AI In The Workplace



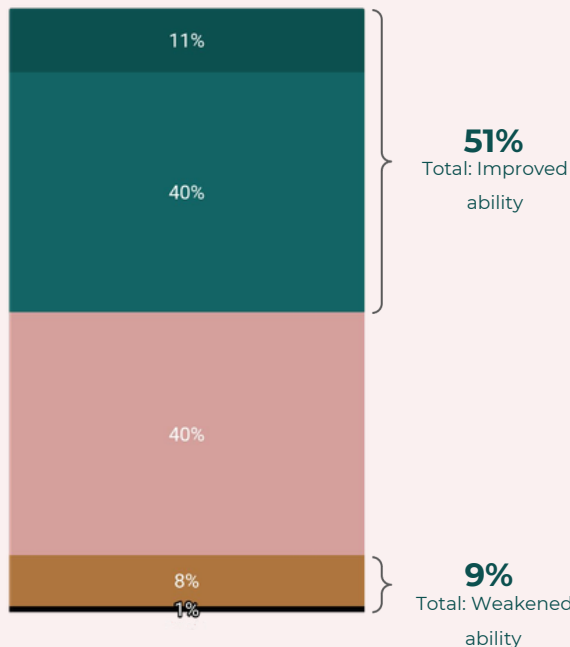
Compared to all leaders and workers who use AI at work, **senior managers are less confident or uncertain** (+9% pts) they could perform their job if AI were unavailable in the future.

# Female workers feel AI is weakening their ability to think critically when it comes to completing tasks and making decisions at work.

## AI & Critical Thinking In The Workplace

Base: Use AI at work

- Significantly improved my ability
- Somewhat improved my ability
- No impact
- Somewhat weakened my ability
- Significantly weakened my ability



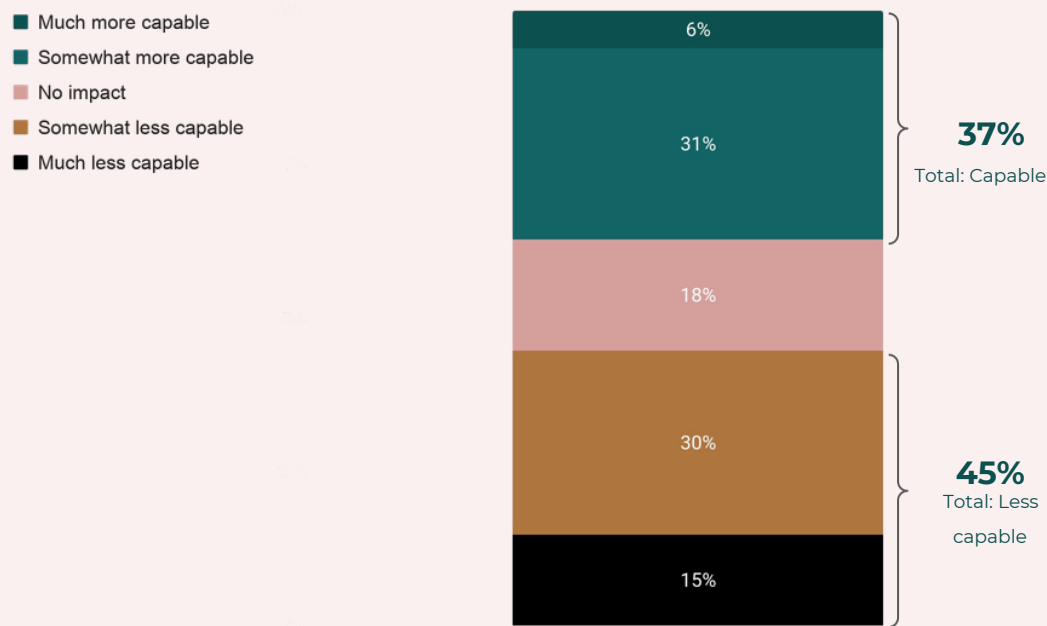
Compared to the entire workforce who use AI, a higher proportion of **senior leaders** (+10% pts) and **males** (+4% pts) believe AI has significantly improved their ability to think critically at work.

Compared to the entire workforce who use AI, a higher proportion of **females** (+4% pts) believe AI has significantly weakened their ability to think critically at work.

# Some Australian workers believe AI is improving workplace capability, a sentiment shared among senior leaders, those who manage others, and hybrid workers.

## AI & Overall Workplace Capability

Base: Total Workforce



Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **senior leaders** (+13% pts), **males** (+4% pts), those who **manage employees** (+7% pts) and those who have a **hybrid office/remote role** (+7% pts) believe AI is making today's workers more capable overall.

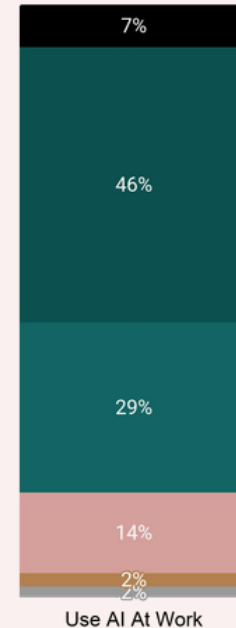
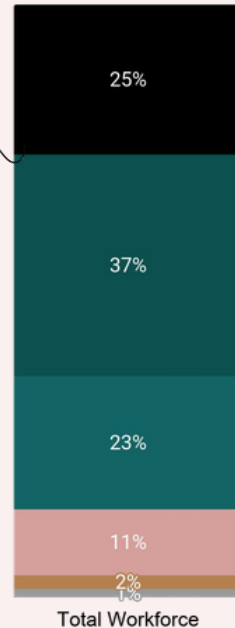
Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **females** (+4% pts), those who **don't manage employees** (+11% pts), **individual teammembers** (+7% pts) and those who **work in large organisations** of 500+ staff (+7% pts) believe AI is making today's workers less capable overall.

# A proportion of the Australian workforce believes AI has no bearing on their work output, with 7% of those currently using it for work believing it doesn't determine output.

## AI & Work Output

- None
- 1-10%
- 11-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- More than 75%

Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **business owners** (+11 pts), those who don't **manage employees** (+17 pts), **individual team members** (+8 pts), **sole traders** (+21 pts), those who **work in small businesses with 2-19 employees** (+6 pts) and those who **work remotely** (+16 pts) don't believe AI influences their work output.



**18%**  
Total: Influence of 26% or more

# The majority of the Australian workforce envisions AI will weaken workplace skills in the long run.

## AI & The Future Workplace

Base: Total Workforce

- Much stronger
- Somewhat stronger
- No difference
- Somewhat weaker
- Much weaker

5%

25%

16%

32%

20%

2%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

1%

6%

25%

16%

32%

20%

31%

Total: Stronger

Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **senior leaders** (+15% pts), those who **manage employees** (+9% pts) and **males** (+5% pts) believe the next generation of workers will have weaker workplace skills because of AI.

52%

Total: Weaker

Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **individual team members** (+10% pts), those who **don't manage employees** (+13% pts) and those who work in **larger organisations** of 500+ staff (+8% pts) believe the next generation of workers will have weaker workplace skills because of AI.

# 4. AI & Workplace Communication

---

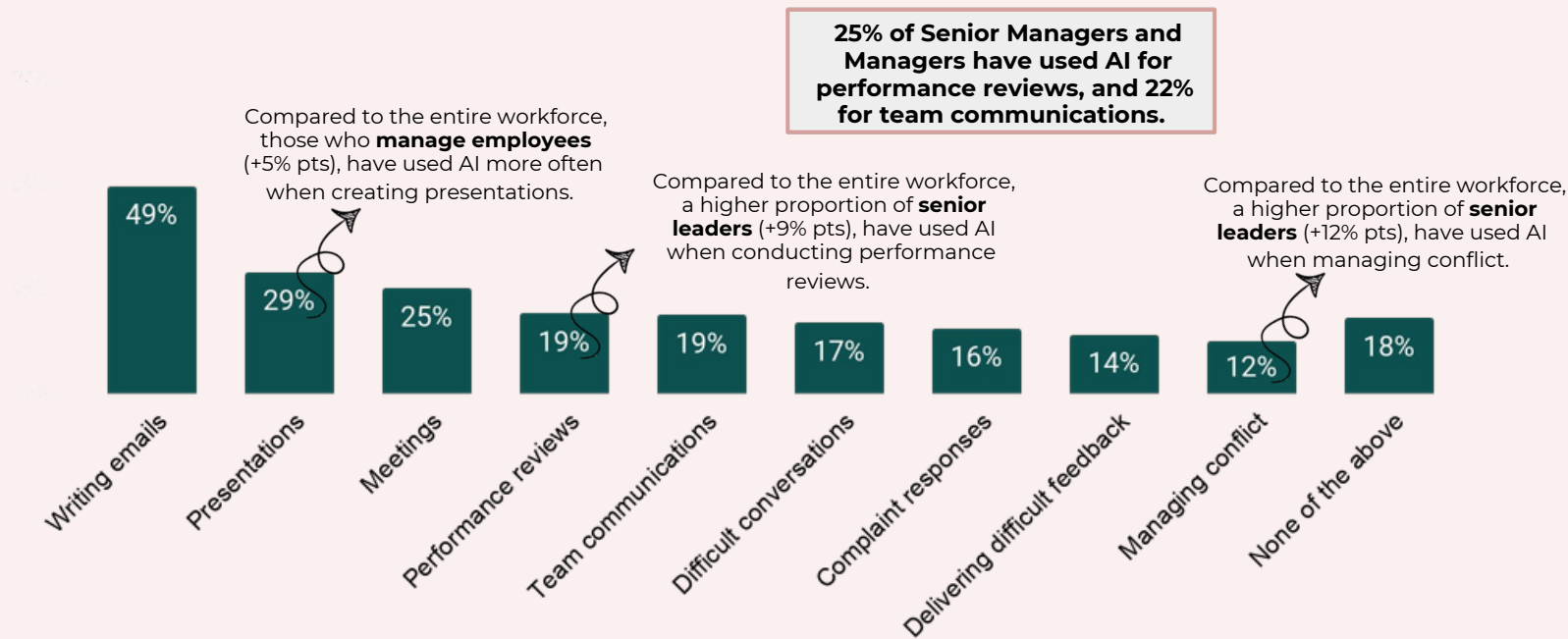
Insights into how AI is changing workplace communications.

# Half of all Australian inboxes are AI assisted content.

Senior leaders and managers are more likely to use AI when communicating, particularly for reviews, conflicts and general communications in presentations.

## Using AI In Workplace Communications

Base: Use AI at work



# Some Australian workers believe AI plays no role in workplace communications-

Sentiment held by team members, those who don't manage others, work remotely or are in small organisations.

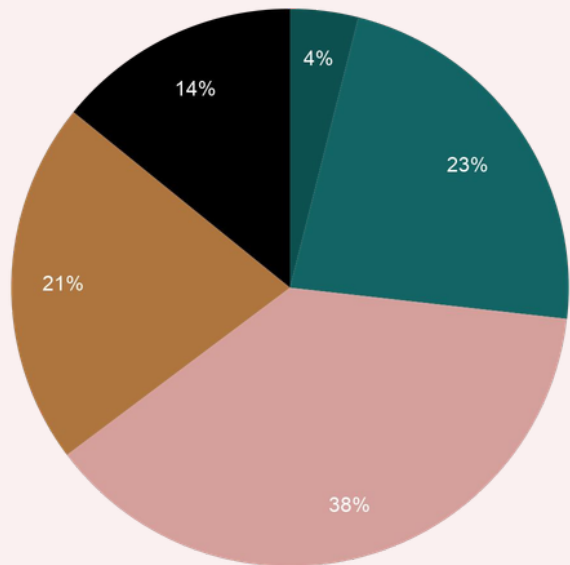
## Using AI In Workplace Communications

Base: Non Sole Traders

35%

Total: Rarely or Never

Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), a higher proportion of **individual team members** (+10% pts), those that **don't manage others** (+15% pts), those who **work in small businesses** with 2-19 employees (+13% pts) and those who **work remotely** (+14% pts) believe workplace communications are rarely/never written by AI.



● Always ● Often ● Sometimes ● Rarely ● Never

27%

Total: Always or Often

Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), a higher proportion of **seniors leaders** (+11% pts), those that **manage others** (+6% pts) and those with **hybrid office/remote roles** (+11% pts) believe workplace communications are always/often written by AI.

# AI generated workplace communication does generate a level of trust for some, however 47% of workers prefer workplace communications created solely by their leaders.

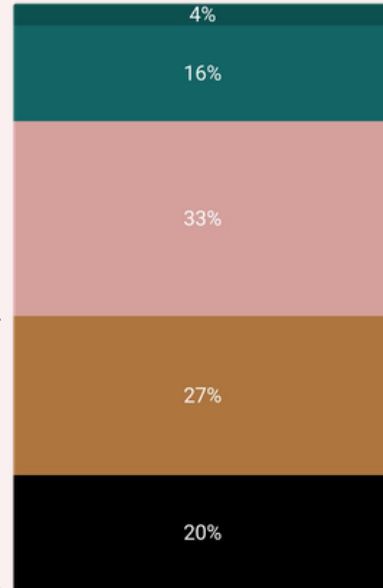
## AI, Workplace Communications & Trust

Base: Non Sole Traders

- Much more
- Somewhat more
- About the same
- Somewhat less
- Much less

**47%**  
Total: Trust AI-generated workplace communication less than one written by a person

Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), those that **don't manage employees** (+14% pts), and those **from small businesses** of 2-19 employees (+7% pts) trust AI-generated workplace communication less than one written by a human.



**20%**  
Total: Trust AI-generated workplace communication more than one written by a person

Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), a higher proportion of **senior managers** (+12% pts) and **managers** (+6% pts) trust AI-generated workplace communication more than one written by a human.

**53%**  
Total: Trust AI-generated workplace communication more or the same amount as one written by a person

# While 1 in 4 (25%) Senior Managers and Managers are using AI for performance reviews, only 9% of the workforce are entirely comfortable with their manager doing so - with individual team members and those who rarely/never using AI the most opposed.

## AI & Performance Reviews

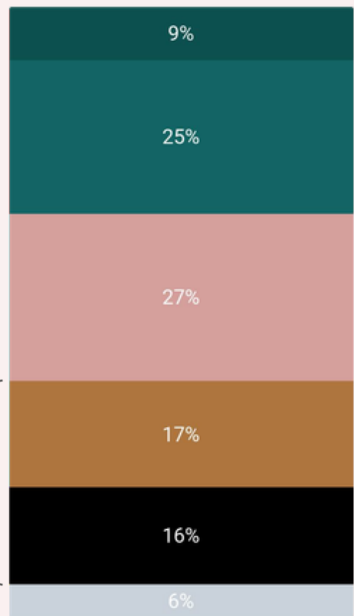
Base: Total Workforce

- Very comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Neutral
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- I am a business owner. I don't have a manager.

33%

Total: Not comfortable

Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **individual team members** (+7% pts), and those that **rarely** (+12% pts) or **never use AI at work** (+18% pts) are the least comfortable knowing their manager used AI to write their performance review.



34%

Total: Comfortable

Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **senior managers** (+14% pts), **managers** (+6% pts) and those who **work hybrid office/remote roles** (+10% pts) are more comfortable knowing their manager used AI to write their performance review.

# 5. AI & Workplace Recruitment

---

Insights into how AI is changing workplace recruitment,  
including management preference.

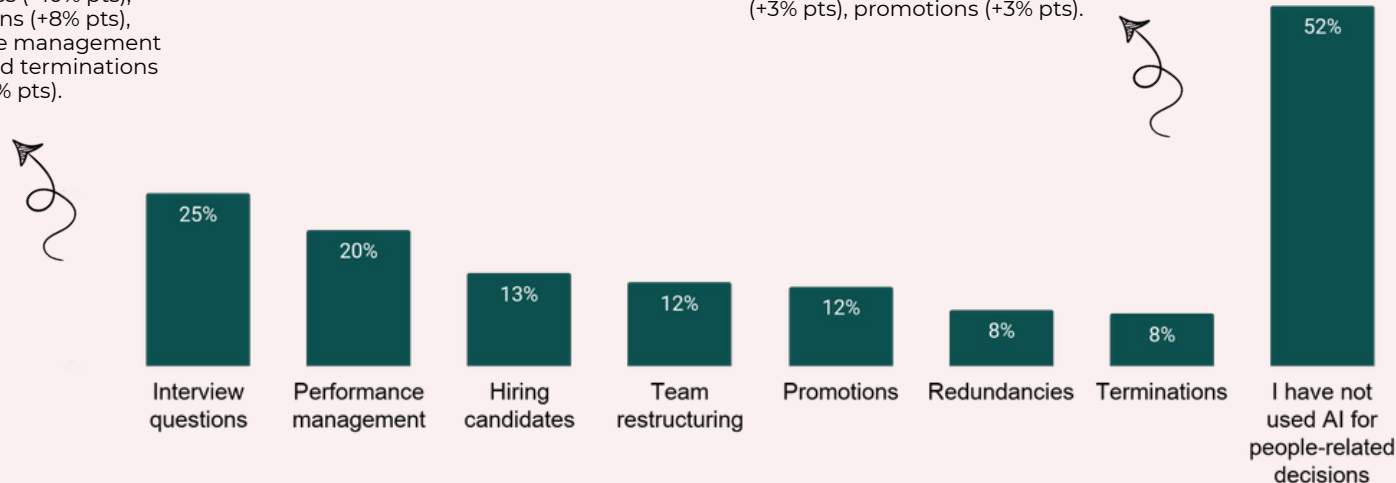
# AI plays a considerable role in people-related decisions, with managers over-indexing in using AI across these management areas.

## Using AI For People Management

Base: Use AI at work and are not a Sole Trader

Compared to the entire workforce that use AI at work (and are not Sole Traders), more **senior managers** use AI for hiring candidates (+10% pts), promotions (+8% pts), performance management (+9% pts) and terminations (+6% pts).

Compared to the entire workforce that use AI at work (and are not Sole Traders), **those that manage other employees** use AI across areas of people management; particularly interviewing (+4% pts), performance management (+5% pts), hiring (+3% pts), restructuring (+3% pts), promotions (+3% pts).

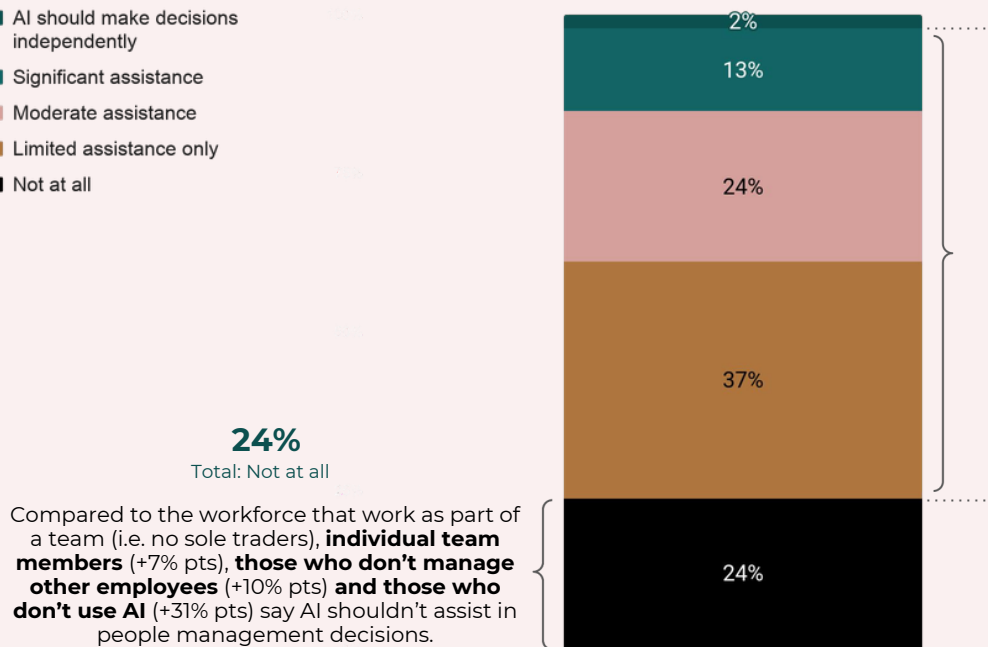


# Only 2% of the Australian workforce believes AI should make all people management decisions independently, while 74% say AI should play an advisory role in people-related decisions.

## AI & People Management

Base: Non Sole Traders

- AI should make decisions independently
- Significant assistance
- Moderate assistance
- Limited assistance only
- Not at all



**74%**

Total: Some level of assistance

Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), **senior managers** (+13% pts) and those who **work hybrid office/remote roles** (+9% pts) say AI should assist in people management decisions.

**24%**

Total: Not at all

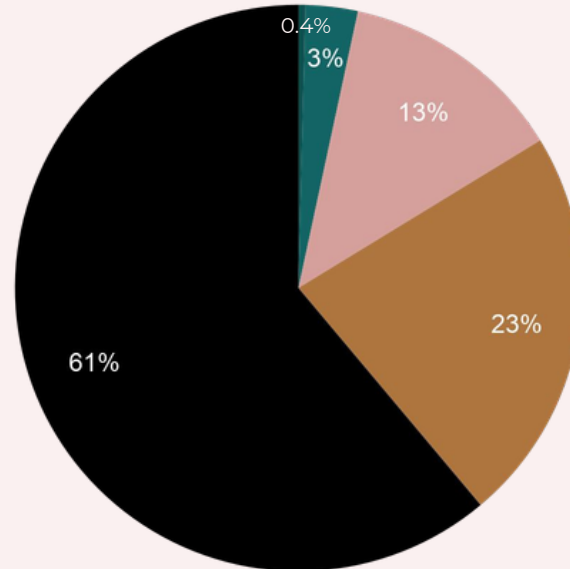
Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), **individual team members** (+7% pts), **those who don't manage other employees** (+10% pts) and **those who don't use AI** (+31% pts) say AI shouldn't assist in people management decisions.

## Almost no Australians want to be managed by AI, although 13% of Australians have no strong preference between 'machine' and a human.

### Preferred Management

Base: Total Workforce

Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **individual team members** (+6% pts), those that **don't manage employees** (+9% pts), and those **from large businesses** of 500+ employees (+9% pts) would definitely prefer to be managed by a person (over AI)



● Definitely AI ● Probably AI ● No preference ● Probably a person ● Definitely a person

## 6. AI Governance & Training

---

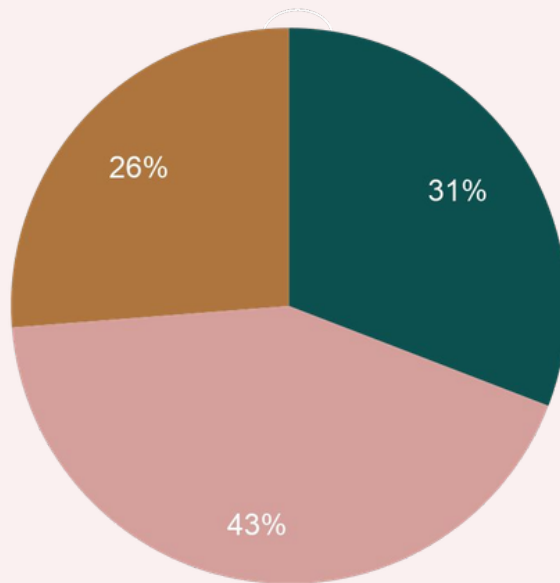
Insights into managing the rules and training around AI in the workplace.

## Only 1 in 3 of Australia's workforce claim their organisation has an AI policy, being more prevalent amongst employees from mid-sized and large organisations.

### AI Policy

Base: Non Sole Traders

- Yes
- No
- Unsure



**31%**

Total: Have an AI Policy

Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), **senior managers** (+12% pts), those who **manage other employees** (+6%pts), those from **mid-sized organisations** with 100-499 employees(+9% pts), those from **large organisations** with 500+ employees(+12%pts) and those who **work hybrid office/remote roles** (+17%pts) say are more likely to claim their organisation has an AI policy

## Only 1 in 4 of the Australian workforce claim to have received formal AI training, with more senior managers, managers and those who work in hybrid office/remote roles claiming to have been trained.

### Formal AI Training

Base: Non Sole Traders



Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), a higher proportion of **males** (+3% pts), **senior managers** (+20% pts), **managers** (+6% pts), and those who **work hybrid office/remote roles** (+12% pts) say they have received formal AI training at their workplace.

Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), a higher proportion of **females** (+4% pts), **individual team members** (+11% pts), **office based workers** (+4% pts) and **remote workers** (+10% pts) say they haven't received formal AI training at their workplace.

# The Australian workforce is relatively divided on whether they have received the appropriate guidance on AI, with 46% believing they have, and 54% feeling otherwise.

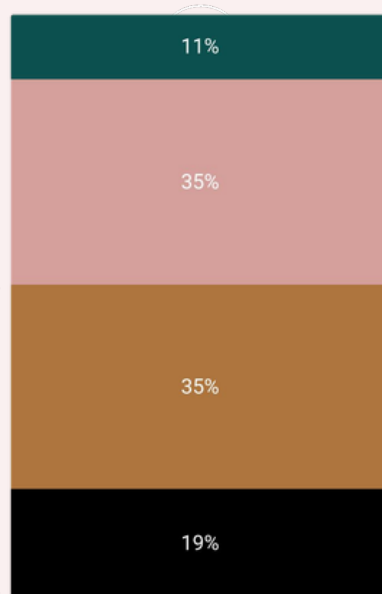
## Workplace Guardrails When Using AI

Base: Non Sole Traders

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, somewhat
- No, not really
- No, not at all

54%

Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), a higher proportion of **females** (+3% pts), **individual team members** (+13% pts), those who **don't manage other employees** (+14% pts), **office based workers** (+3% pts) and **remote workers** (+14% pts) feel their organisation hasn't provided enough guidance on how AI should be used.



46%

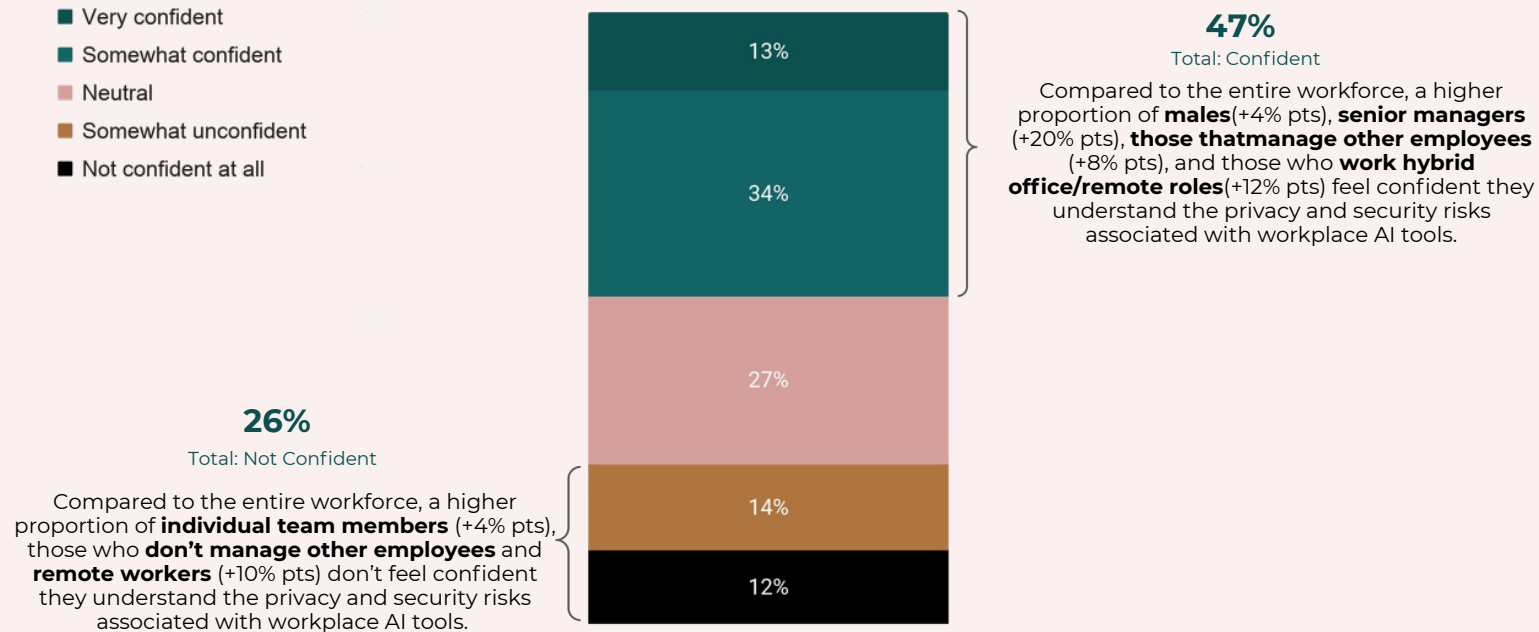
Total: Yes

Compared to the workforce that work as part of a team (i.e. no sole traders), a higher proportion of **males** (+4% pts), **senior managers** (+20% pts), **managers** (+10% pts), and those who **work hybrid office/remote roles** (+14% pts) feel their organisation has provided enough guidance on how AI should be used.

**Almost half (47%) of Australia's workforce are confident they understand the risks associated with AI,**  
although remote workers, individual team members and non-managers are not as confident.

### Understanding the Privacy & Security Risks of AI

Base: Total Workforce



# Managers, including senior leaders, are the most prone to using unapproved AI tools in their organisation

## Using Non-Endorsed AI Tools At Work

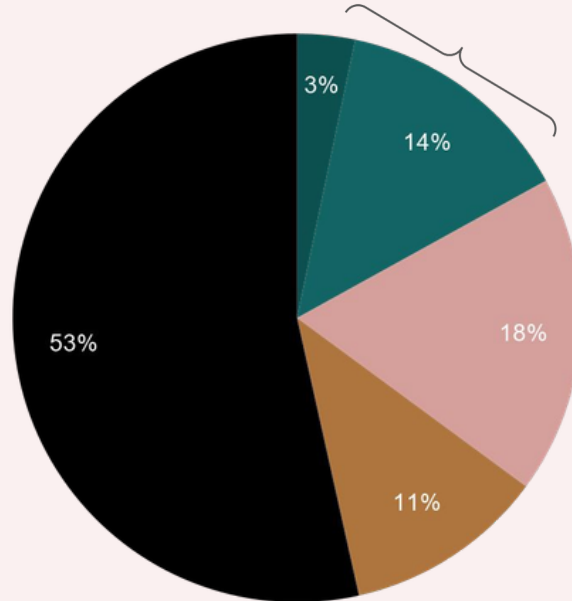
Base: Use AI at work and are not a Sole Trader

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

**53%**

Total: Never use unapproved AI tools at work

Compared to the entire workforce that use AI at work (and are not Sole Traders), a higher proportion of **individual team members** (+7% pts) and those who **don't manage other employees** (+8% pts) don't use AI tools that are not approved by their organisation.



**17%**

Total: Use unapproved AI tools at work

Compared to the entire workforce that use AI at work (and are not Sole Traders), a higher proportion of **senior managers** (+8% pts) and those who **manage other employees** (+3% pts) use AI tools that are not approved by their organisation.

# 7. AI & Career Progression

---

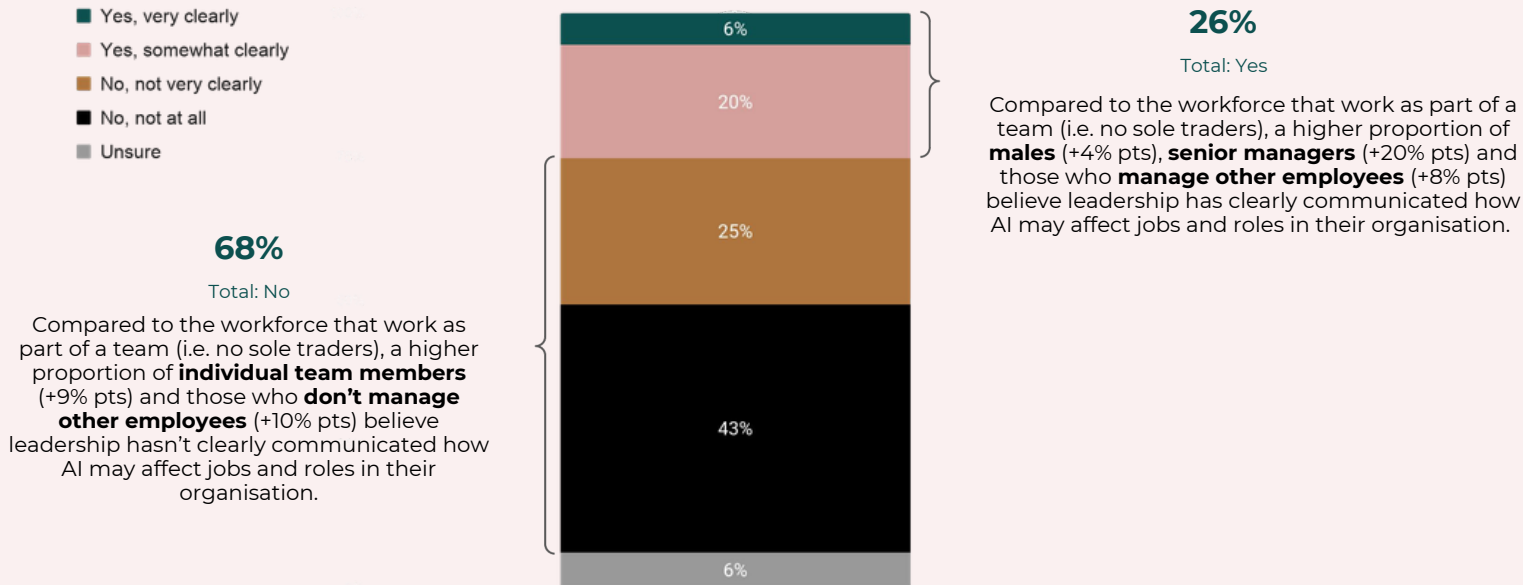
Insights into AI's impact on future career progression.

# Over 2 in 3 (68%) of those working in businesses don't believe their leaders have clearly communicated how AI will affect jobs and roles.

Interestingly, however, 46% of senior leaders believe their organisation has done a good job of articulating the impacts.

## AI & Workplace Communication About Career Progression

Base: Non Sole Traders



**Over 2 in 5 (45%) of the Australian workforce are not concerned that AI will replace part of their role, while 19% are not sure what to make of AI and how this will change their job in the future.**

### AI Efficiencies

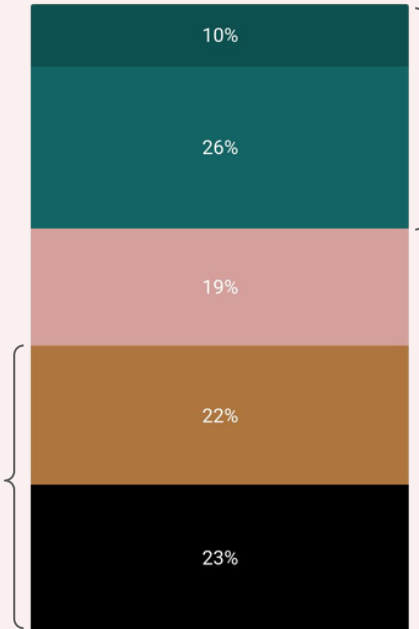
Base: Total Workforce

- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Neutral
- Not very concerned
- Not concerned at all

**45%**

Total: Not concerned & not very concerned

Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **males** (+5% pts), **business owners** (+13% pts), those who **don't manage other people** (+6% pts), and those who **work remote roles** (+10% pts) are not concerned that AI may replace aspects of their role.



**36%**

Total: Concerned

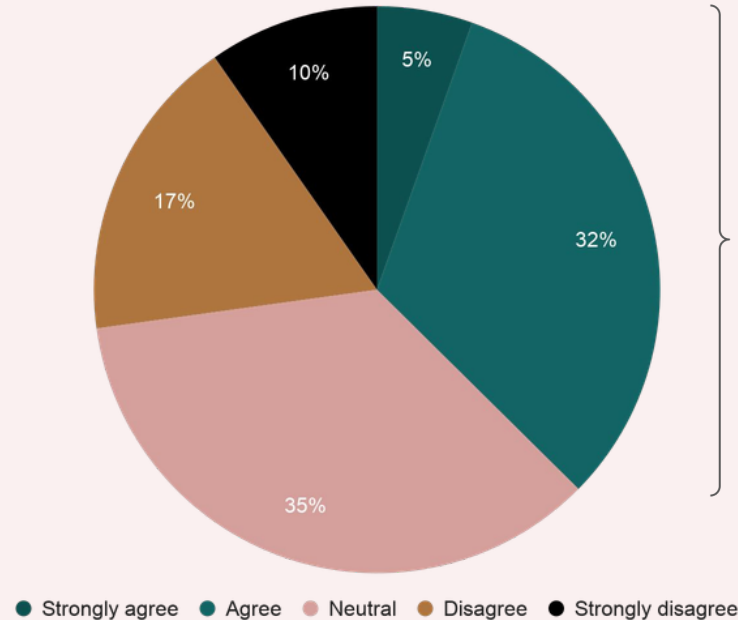
Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **females** (+4% pts) and those with a **hybrid office/remote role** (+6% pts) are concerned that AI may replace aspects of their role.

# 37% of the Australian workforce believe refusing to use AI will negatively impact their chances of progressing in their career.

This sentiment is most commonly held by senior leaders and those who manage other employees.

## Rufusing To Use AI

Base: Total Workforce



**37%**

Total: Agree

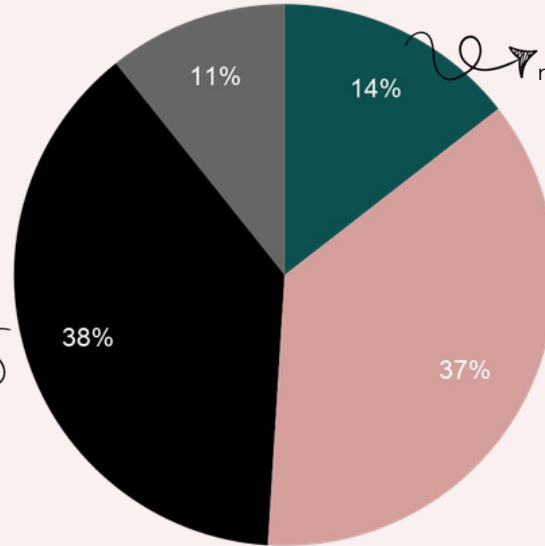
Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **senior managers** (+13% pts) and those who **manage other employees** (+7% pts) agree by refusing to use/increase usage of AI, this would negatively impact their career progression.

# Half (51%) of the Australian workforce believe AI will reduce jobs in their profession in the next 5 years, with females the most pessimistic about what the future holds.

## AI Workforce Projection

Base: Total Workforce

- Yes, significantly
- Yes, somewhat
- No
- Unsure



Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **females** (+3% pts) believe AI will reduce jobs in their profession in the next 5 years.

Compared to the entire workforce, a higher proportion of **business owners** (+11% pts), **sole traders** (+16% pts) and those who work in **small businesses with 2-19 employees** (+8% pts) believe AI will not reduce jobs in their profession in the next 5 years.

# 8. Appendix

---

# Female workers value privacy when it comes to their AI searches, with 1 in 10 (12%) saying they would be embarrassed for colleagues to be across their searches.

## AI Transparency In The Workplace

Base: Use AI at work

