

connective 



The state of

AI Readiness

in Australian broking

RESEARCH REPORT

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Introduction

Why AI readiness matters

Artificial intelligence has shifted from novelty, experimentation to necessity in just over two years. Since, we have seen rapid advances in capability, accuracy and usability. This isn't abstract "future tech." It is now embedded in everyday software, client communications, document handling, research and basic workflow automation.

For Australian brokers, AI represents a practical way to protect time, increase productivity, augment capability and strengthen client experience. The broker market is more competitive than ever. With broker market share high and consumer expectations rising, the combination of broker expertise + AI capability is becoming a genuine point of differentiation. Brokers keep the high-value work—relationships, judgement, trust—while AI supports the heavy lifting underneath.

The brokers who will win in the next two to three years are those who can use AI safely, confidently and consistently.

Australia's regulatory and safety context

AI use in financial services, although fairly unregulated as of today, sits inside a strict regulatory environment. Brokers must consider:

- ASIC expectations around quality of advice, record-keeping, data handling and avoiding misleading outputs from AI systems.
- The Privacy Act 1988, with major reforms coming in 2026 that will increase requirements around transparency, consent and data use.
- OAIC guidance on accuracy, privacy, transparency and responsible automation.
- APRA's influence on lender-side standards around data, risk and operational resilience.
- AISI (Australian Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute)—the national body focused on AI safety and harm reduction.

Using AI without guardrails exposes brokers to privacy breaches, inaccurate information, inconsistent advice and reputational risk. AI readiness is as much about safety and compliance as it is about opportunity.

National and global alignment

Several credible bodies provide direction on AI readiness and have been used to

- National AI Centre (NAIC)
- CSIRO Data61
- Cisco and Salesforce AI readiness benchmarks
- Gartner insights on enterprise AI maturity

Across all sources, the message is consistent:

AI success requires strategy, capability, systems, safe use and culture.

About this report

This report is based on a national survey of more than 300 Australian brokers across mortgage, commercial and asset finance lending.

It blends responses from members of Connective and non-member brokers.

Its purpose is to assess how ready brokers are to adopt AI safely, confidently and effectively, and to highlight where the greatest opportunities and risks lie.

This is a practical, plain-English assessment designed to help brokers understand where they stand today, what's holding them back and what actions will move them forward.

Learn more about Connective and our All-in-one AI enabled platform for brokers.

[LEARN MORE](#)

A message from Glenn Lees

CEO, Connective



2025 marked an inflection point for the broking industry's AI journey. Our research shows that 86% of brokers believe AI will be essential or helpful to staying competitive over the next two years. Yet 65% have no clear AI strategy or documented plan, and more than 40% have no governance framework in place. Excitement is high. Structure is not. In the absence of AI-specific legislation and with regulatory expectations still evolving, many brokers remain uncertain about where to start and how to deploy AI responsibly.

In 2026, brokers face both opportunity and responsibility. We have always been clear that technology's value isn't the hype. It's the concrete impact it has on workflow, service delivery and client outcomes. The market is evolving fast. AI offers efficiency gains, sharper insights and competitive advantage, but only if approached with a risk-based mindset and strong foundations. This report offers clarity on the path forward.

It's not about shiny new tools and adding to the hype. It's about building confidence, capability and safe AI habits that enhance what brokers already do well. We believe that real innovation is practical, incremental and grounded in strong operational discipline. Brokers should be cautiously optimistic about AI's potential, but not lose sight of core systems, robust processes and strong client relationships.

Technology isn't just AI. Your CRM, loan origination systems and workflow platforms remain critical to broker success. Getting the basics right amplifies the benefits of new capabilities.

On regulation, we're in a transitional moment. There is no AI-specific legislation yet, but ASIC's Key Issues Outlook 2026 highlights the very real risks associated with AI-driven decisions, cybercrime and governance gaps, and points to the need for strong internal frameworks now rather than later.

ASIC's focus reflects a broader reality. Regulators are moving quickly, but existing laws remain technology neutral. Your obligations around consumer protection, disclosure, privacy and director duties apply to AI as they do to any other system. Responsible use isn't something to be deferred until new rules arrive. It needs to be embedded from day one.

Connective's approach has been deliberate. We test and refine internally first. We focus on solving real broker pain points. We build governance and risk controls up front. That's how we design technology brokers can trust and regulators respect.

This report lays out a practical roadmap for 2026. It is not a checklist of trends, but a guide to building capability that is safe, sustainable and aligned with both broker priorities and emerging regulatory expectations. AI will become a normalised part of the broker toolkit. But it must be used thoughtfully, governed properly and anchored in strong operational systems.

Innovation and prudence are not opposites. They are the dual engines of sustainable growth. We hope this research helps you understand where you stand across the critical pillars that underpin AI adoption, and steer both with confidence.

Glenn Lees
CEO, Connective

Executive summary

Artificial intelligence is reshaping how professional services operate, and Australian brokers are no exception. As we turn a page on 2025, which has been a year of experimentation for most and enter 2026, this report finds that brokers are mentally ready for AI and eager to adopt it, but operationally underprepared, particularly in data, systems and governance.

The opportunity is significant, but so is the risk. As the regulatory landscape evolves—including ASIC’s guidance, the Privacy Act reforms and the establishment of the Australian Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute (AISI)—brokers will need practical guidance to use AI safely and effectively.

Connective is well positioned to support brokers during this transition, helping them build capability, strengthen governance and adopt AI in ways that enhance productivity and protect client trust.

Speak to us about how we can help you navigate this evolving tech landscape.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Across a national survey of brokers, five clear pillars of AI readiness emerged:

- READY** **Strategy and mindset**
Brokers believe AI is essential to staying competitive and improving efficiency.
- EMERGING** **Leadership and capability**
Experimentation is high, but structure adoption, planning, and documentation are limited.
- EMERGING** **Tools and skills**
AI tools are widely used but prompting capability and workflow integration remain underdeveloped.
- GAP** **Data and systems**
Fragmented systems and inconsistent data limit deeper automation and advanced used cases.
- GAP** **Governance and responsible AI**
Most brokers lack policies, guardrails, and confidence in safe, secure, and compliant AI use.

Pillar 1

Strategy and mindset

Mindset is ready. Structure is lagging.

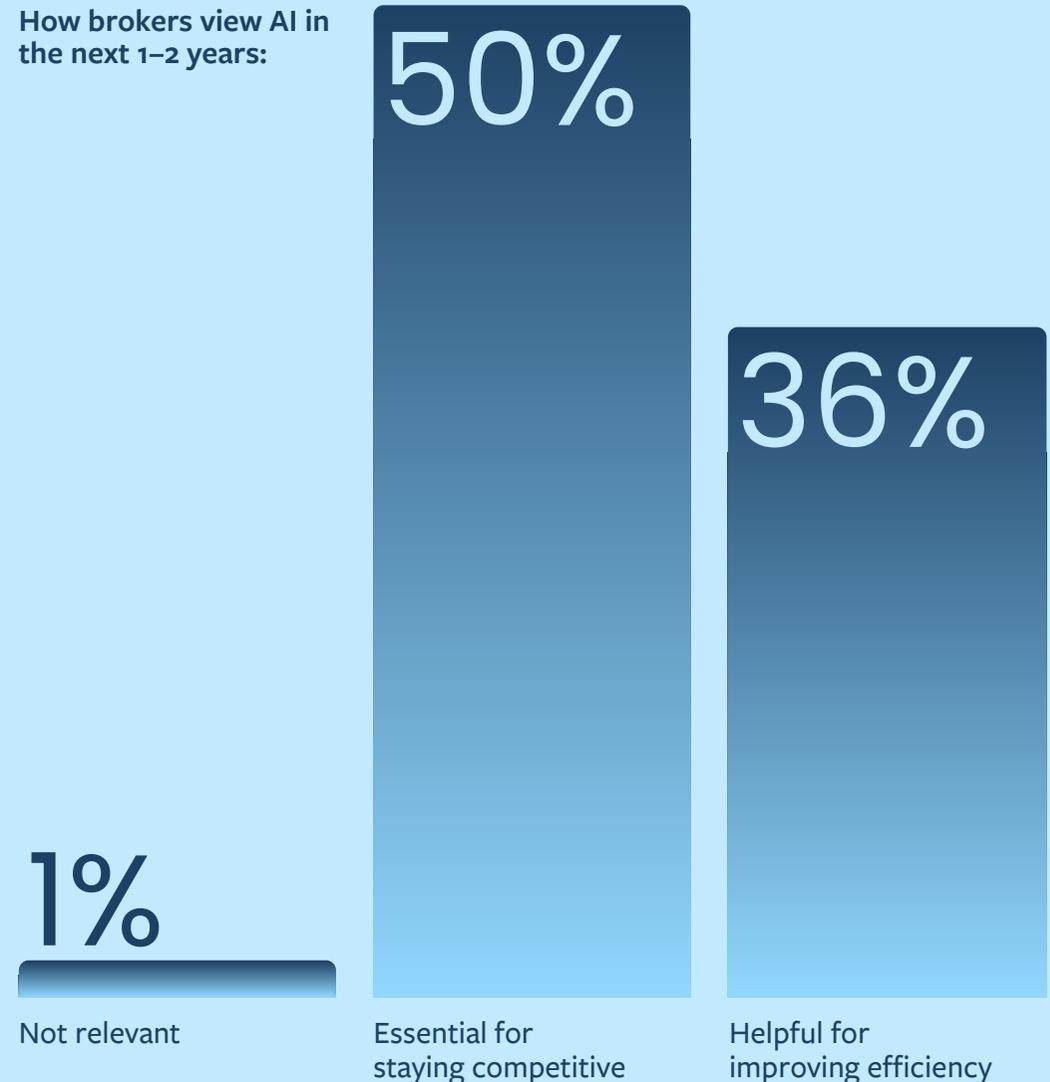
READY

Strategy and mindset reflect how brokers think about AI. Their awareness, enthusiasm, belief in AI's value and willingness to adopt it.

- Most brokers believe AI will be essential or helpful in the next 1–2 years.
- Attitudes are overwhelmingly excited, open or already embedding AI into workflows.
- Top opportunities identified are efficiency, time savings, improved client communication.

This is the strongest AI readiness pillar. **Brokers see AI as essential** and are eager to adopt it, but enthusiasm hasn't translated into structured action.

How brokers view AI in the next 1–2 years:



DO NOW

What brokers should focus on

Quotes shown throughout this report are direct, anonymised responses from Australian brokers who participated in the survey.

Tie AI use to productivity gains, time saving, accuracy or client outcomes.

Identify 1–2 business problems AI can solve.

Shift from experimenting to embedding AI in repeatable workflows.



“The biggest opportunity? Time. AI gives my time back.”



“AI will be essential for staying competitive. It’s not optional anymore.”

Pillar 2

Leadership and capability

Learning is happening. Leadership is missing.

EMERGING

Leadership and capability reflect how prepared brokers are to drive AI adoption. For most brokerages, leadership means the owner or sole operator setting direction and allocating time to learn.

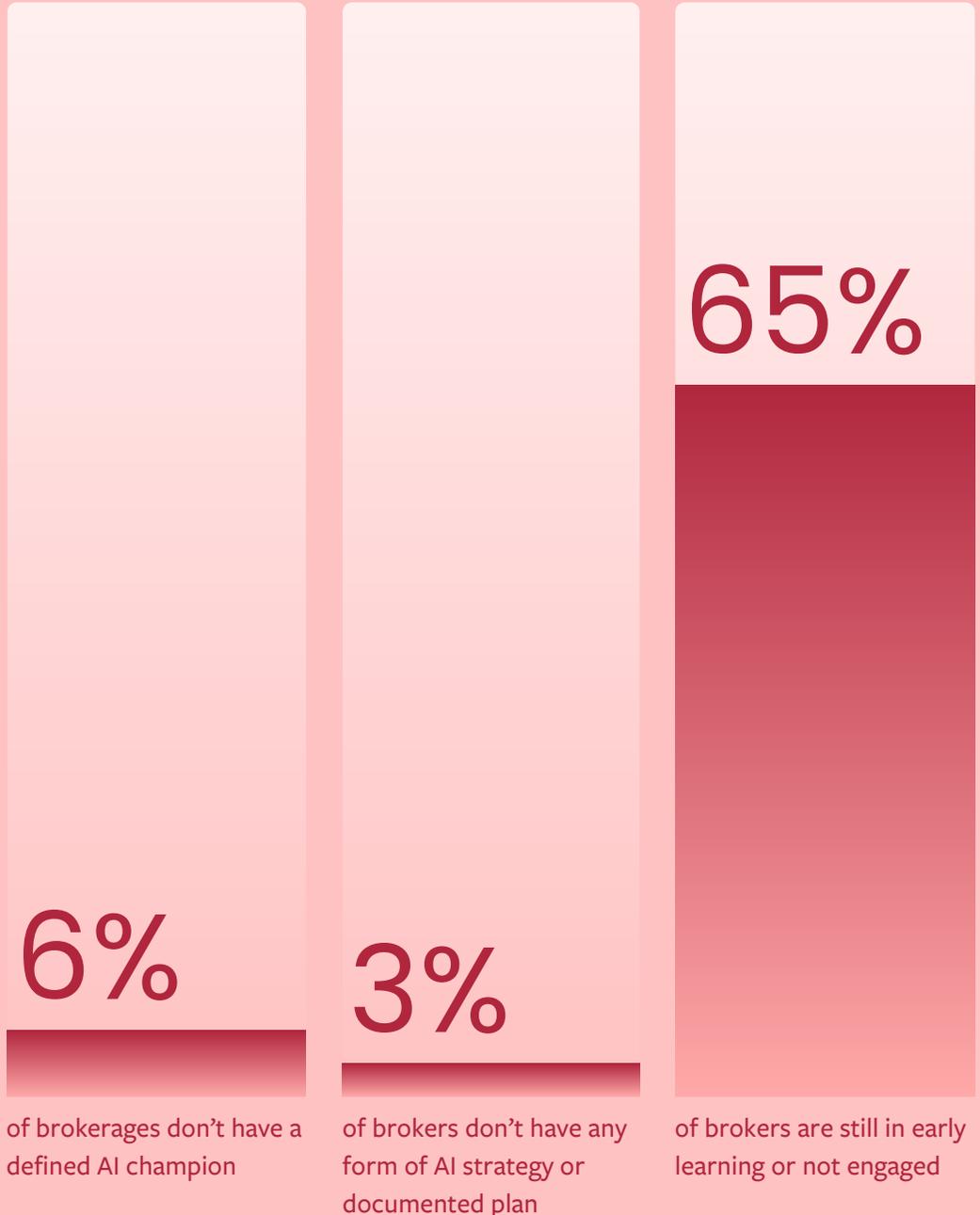
- Most brokers rely on informal, self-led learning.
- Few have documented use cases, clearly identified processes they can use AI for, or an AI plan.
- Time, uncertainty and lack of clarity over starting points are major barriers.

Experimentation is high but structure is low.

Brokers are testing tools but lack clear ownership, time allocation or defined workflows opportunities.



Only **one in twenty** brokerages has an identified “AI lead”.



ACT NOW

What brokers should focus on

Block regular time for AI learning or exploration.

Build a simple AI adoption rhythm. Prioritise time intensive work, repetitive tasks and frictions points.

“Someone in the business is playing with AI, but **nothing formalised.**”



Nominate an AI champion for accountability.

Document early use cases and goals, even small.

“I don’t know where to start.”



“I need practical examples, **not theory.**”



Access our AI Guardrails for Brokers - a Connective-vetted AI dos and don'ts guide that every brokerage can adapt to their own business information and needs.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Pillar 3

Tools and skills

Using AI, but not to its potential.

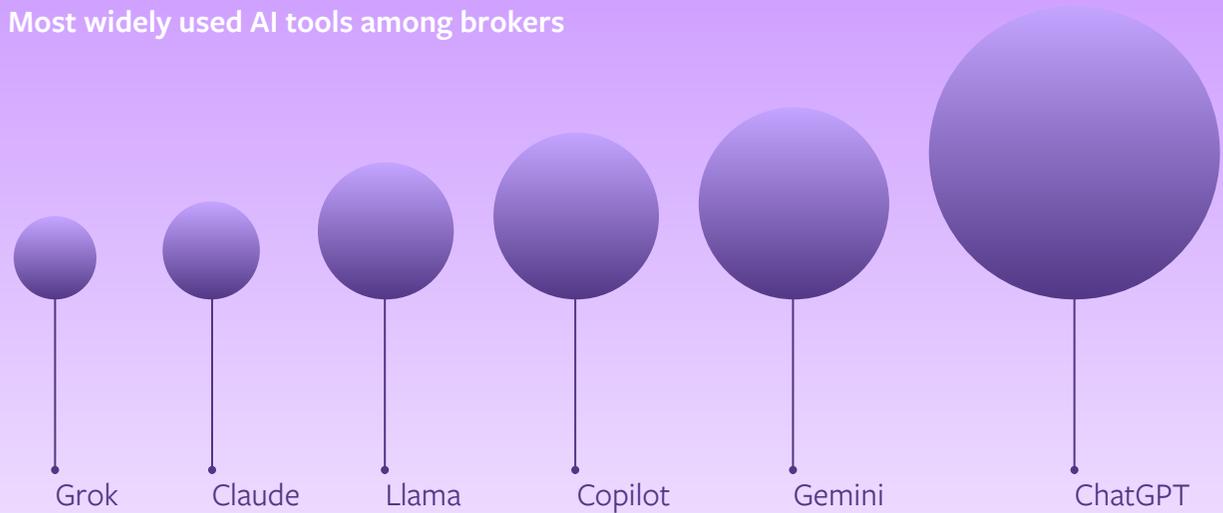
EMERGING

Tools and skills refer to how effectively brokers use AI tools and how confident they feel in prompting, evaluating outputs and choosing the right tool.

- Usage of ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini is widespread.
- Most brokers use free or basic plans.
- Prompting confidence varies significantly.
- Workflow maturity is widely inconsistent.

Brokers are using tools **but not deeply**. Skill levels differ and many rely on surface-level prompting delivering sub-optimal results.

Most widely used AI tools among brokers



How often brokers use AI tools

37% use AI regularly and confidently

37% are experimenting occasionally

14% don't use AI tools at all

ACT NOW

What brokers should focus on

Improve prompting capability using tools' best practice guides.

Choose appropriate paid plans to match privacy and capability appetite.

Standardise 2–3 repeatable workflows using the tools you're comfortable in.

Build confidence through hands-on practice. Consult tools' learning resources. Ask your broker community what works for them.



“Prompting is hit or miss—sometimes great, sometimes useless.”



“I use ChatGPT everyday, but I'm not sure I'm using it well.”

Pillar 4

Data and systems

Data fragmentation is the real blocker.

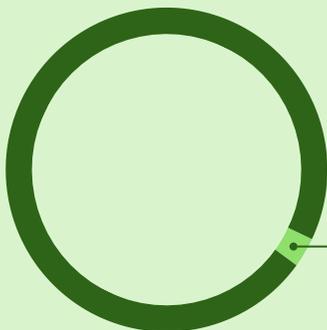
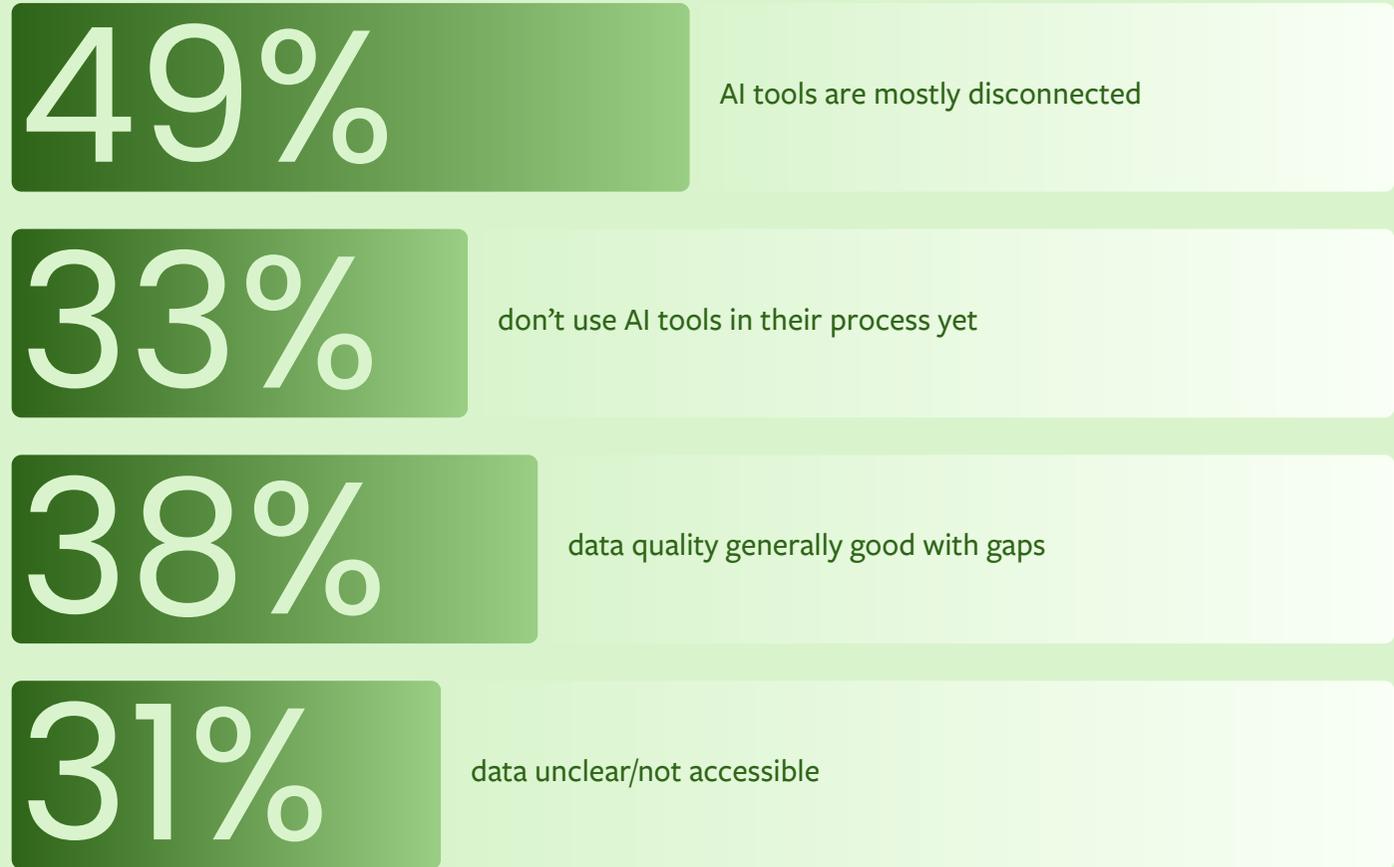
GAP

Data and systems examines whether systems, data quality and processes support effective AI use.

- Systems are often disconnected making adoption even more challenging.
- Data quality and accessibility are inconsistent.
- Poor foundations limit higher-value AI applications.

This is the **weakest structural pillar of AI readiness**. In professional services sectors like broking, where brokers operate in highly fragmented technology ecosystems made up of thousands of different platforms, data and systems gaps block automation opportunities, reporting visibility and CRM-driven workflows.

How connected brokers' AI tools are



Only 3% of brokers have their AI tools embedded

PLAN AHEAD

What brokers should focus on

Ensure safe handling of client information with appropriate security guardrails in place.

Strengthen data hygiene and structure it so AI can read it.

Start with simple, low-risk data workflows with human intervention points for quality assurance.

Align processes to clear outcomes before adding automation.



“Data is everywhere and **nowhere.**”



“Our systems aren’t connected, so AI **can’t go far.**”

Pillar 5

Governance and responsible AI

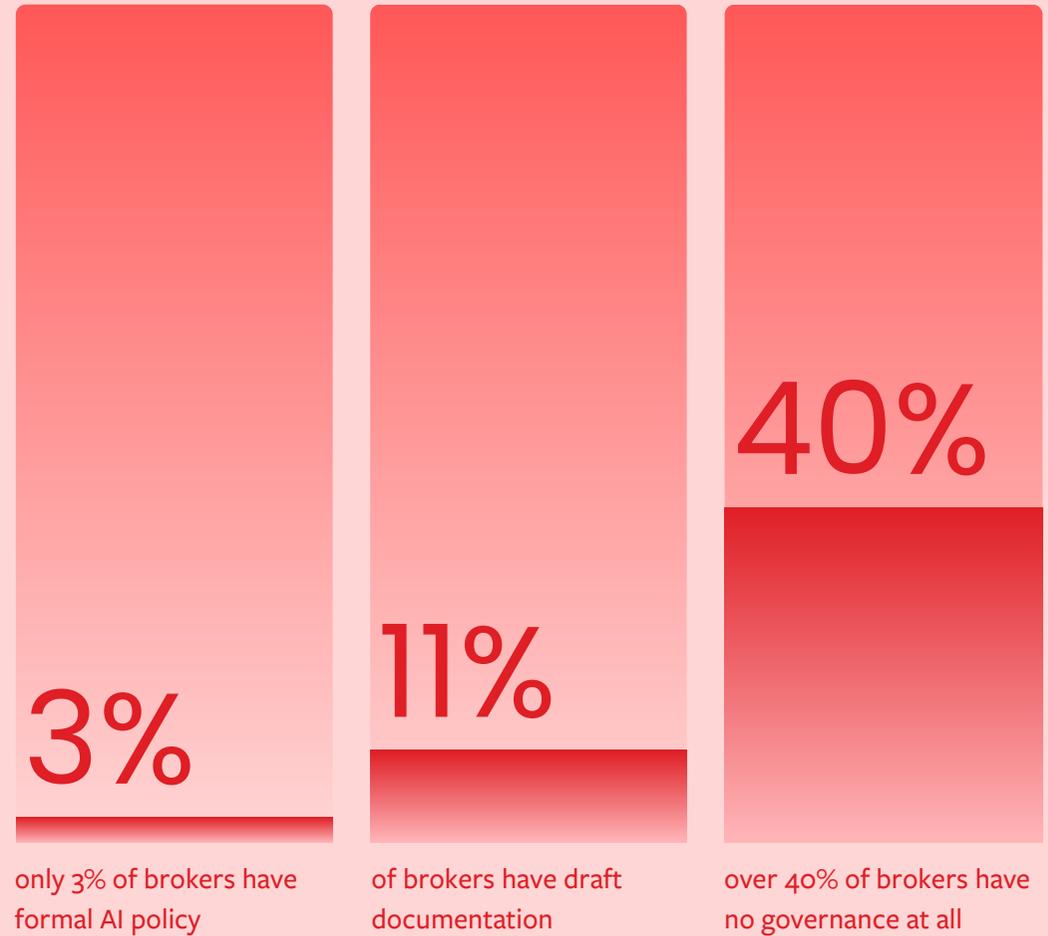
Exposure is high. Confidence is low.

GAP

Governance covers safe, ethical and compliant use of AI—guardrails, policies, accuracy checks and alignment with regulatory obligations.

- Very few brokers have AI policies.
- Confidence in safe and responsible AI use is moderate.
- Brokers often don't fully understand the magnitude of AI-related risks.
- Common concerns include privacy, compliance and accuracy.

Governance is the **least mature pillar of AI readiness amongst brokers**. Brokers are using AI often without knowledge around the appropriate guardrails, increasing exposure to privacy & cyber risk, biased outcomes, algorithmic discrimination and reputational harm.



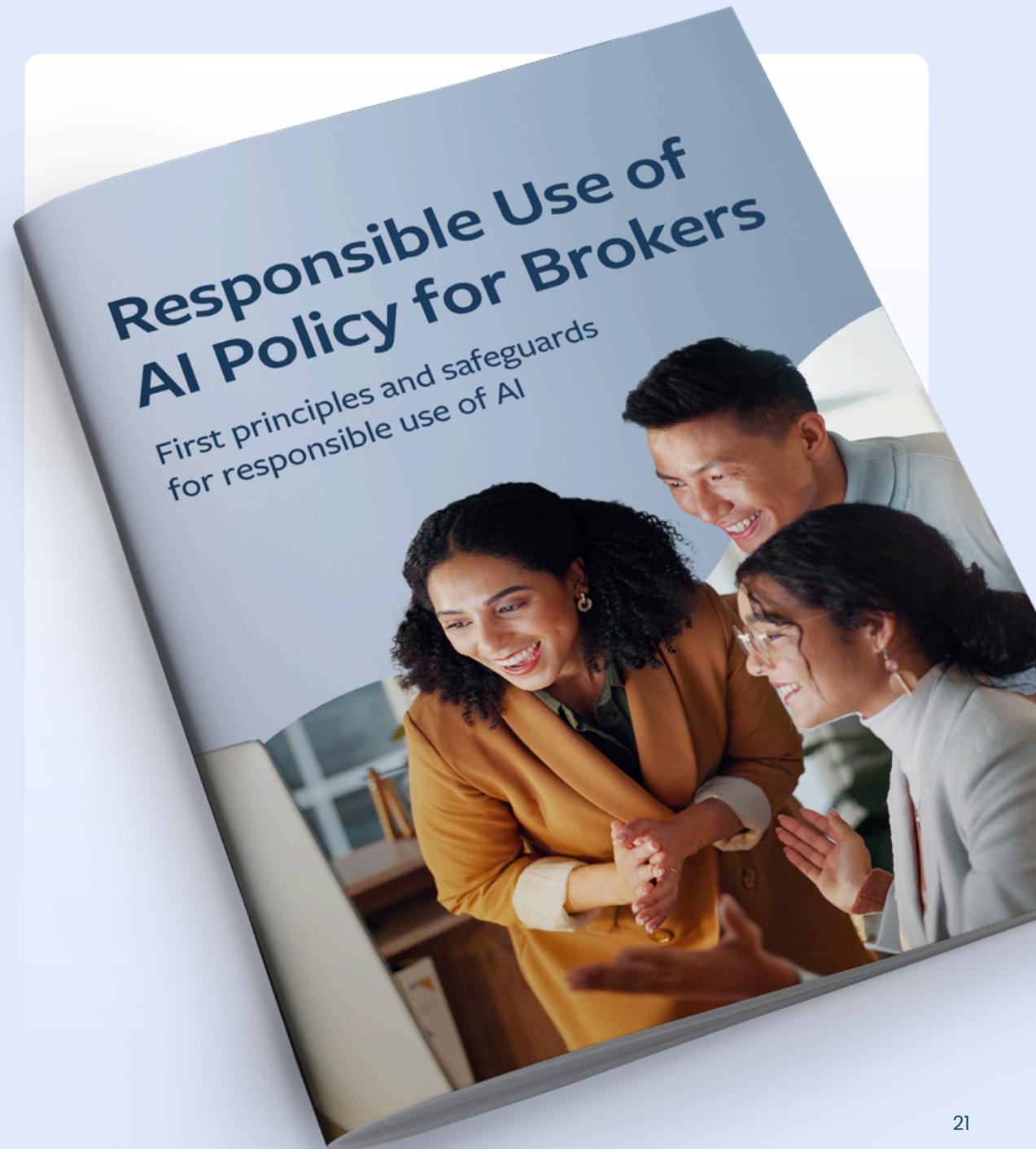
Confidence in safe and responsible use:



Download our Responsible Use of AI Policy for Brokers

As AI becomes part of everyday business for brokers, it's more important than ever to have clear guidelines that support safe, consistent and responsible use across your team and brokerage. This Responsible Use of AI Policy for Brokers template provides a first-principles framework to guide your approach.

[DOWNLOAD](#)



The 2026 roadmap for brokers

A practical guide to building confidence, capability and safe AI habits.

1

Upskill and learn

Set aside a non-negotiable hour a week for learning.

Book a personalised Mercury Nexus demo to see what the industry leading broker platform can do for you

Broker technology



Book now

2

Lead safe AI adoption

Implement AI safety and guardrails.

Download our AI Guardrails for Brokers - Dos and Don'ts

AI Safety & Guardrails:
Dos and Don'ts



Download now

3

Find AI opportunities

Identify 1-2 business problems to solve with AI now.

Chat with our team to identify some quick wins with AI

Where to start with AI



Contact us

Brokers are well positioned to benefit but only if capability, systems and governance gaps are addressed early.

4

Select the right tool

Choose the most appropriate AI tools that work with your existing ecosystem and help you solve your problems.

TIP:
Pay for it for added security and privacy.

Speak to our experts today



Contact us

5

Prioritise compliance

Establish a Responsible AI Policy and conduct accuracy checks.

This template provides a first-principles framework to guide your approach

Responsible AI Policy



Visit now

6

Stay curious

Utilise your network and talk to brokers to understand what works, what doesn't, and what they've implemented in their own businesses.

See what's trending in our 5,000+ broker community

AI Learning Community



Contact us

Methodology

Survey approach

This report draws on a national survey of more than 300 Australian finance brokers across residential, commercial and asset finance. Responses were collected from both Connective brokers and non-member brokers and blended into a single dataset to represent the broader industry.

Question design

Survey questions were structured around Connective's 8 Pillars of AI Readiness and mapped into five broker-relevant readiness dimensions for analysis. All quotes used throughout the report are verbatim responses from anonymous survey participants.

Data analysis

Quantitative responses were analysed to identify sentiment, adoption levels and capability maturity across the five pillars. Qualitative responses were reviewed to identify common themes and broker priorities. The quotes shown within each of the pillars are genuine quotes from anonymous survey respondents.

Limitations

Brokerages vary widely in size, structure and technology maturity. The pace of AI advancement may shift attitudes quickly.

References

- ASIC Key issues outlook 2026
- Australian Government – National AI Centre (NAIC)
- CSIRO Data61 – AI for Business
- ASIC – Regulatory guidance and expectations
- OAIC – Privacy and AI guidance
- Privacy Act 1988 and proposed 2026 reforms
- APRA – Operational risk and data security standards
- Australian Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute (AIS)
- Cisco AI Readiness Index (Australia)
- Salesforce AI Readiness Report (Australia)
- Gartner – AI maturity and enterprise adoption analysis

Keen to learn more?

Download our latest AI resources in our ebook hub on our website

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