

2026 Workforce Productivity Research

Executive Insights for CEOs,
Boards and Senior Leaders

 **EnterpriseWorks**

**Book a complimentary 30 min
Executive Research Briefing**



The next productivity gains will come from better work design - not from working harder

Australia's productivity growth has more than halved in the past decade. Workforce stress is rising, and AI is moving faster than organisations can absorb.

Our research shows the issue is not effort – it is how work is designed and governed.

Strategy is understood, but capacity is lost to competing priorities, fragmented systems, manual reporting and excessive coordination.

The implication for CEOs, boards and leaders is clear:

The next productivity gains will not come from asking people to work harder - they will come from how leaders design, prioritise and govern work.

The opportunity is to connect strategy, systems and people to unlock capacity already inside the organisation and build the capabilities the AI era demands.

**Strategy is understood.
Work is not aligned.**

83%

understand how their work connects to strategic priorities.

only 51%

say their organisation organises work around the most important priorities.¹

¹EnterpriseWorks ANZ Survey of knowledge workers in large organisations, 2026

Darren Moglia
Managing Director

EnterpriseWorks

Research Sponsor

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Declining workforce productivity is contributing to Australia's slowest productivity growth in 50+ years

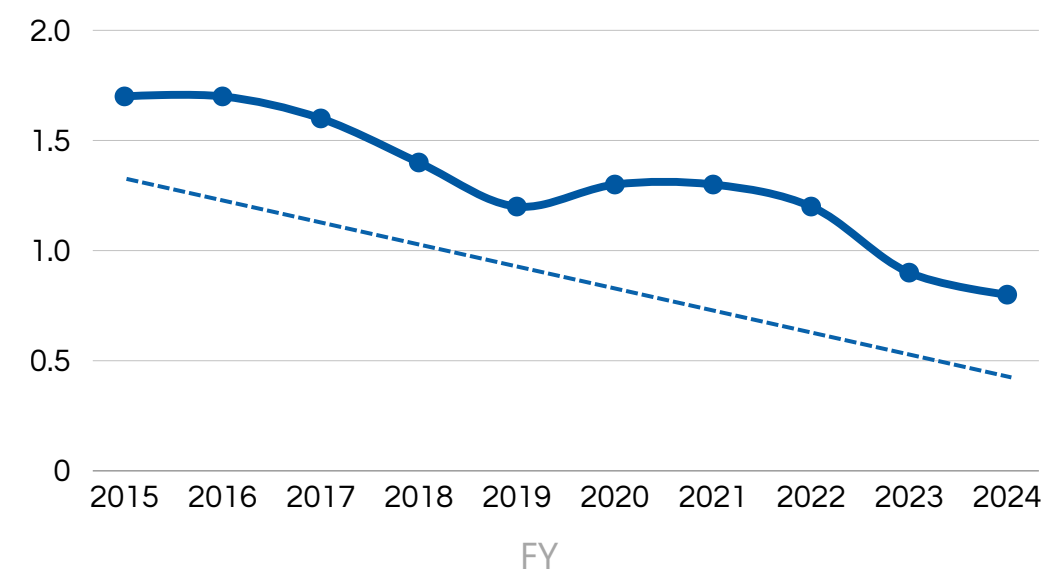
Productivity growth is the main long-term driver of living standards.

It is how we create more value from every hour worked, supporting better wages, services and quality of living.

A structural decline in workforce productivity is reducing the value created by each hour worked and contributing to Australia's broader productivity challenge.

Australia's productivity growth has halved in the past decade

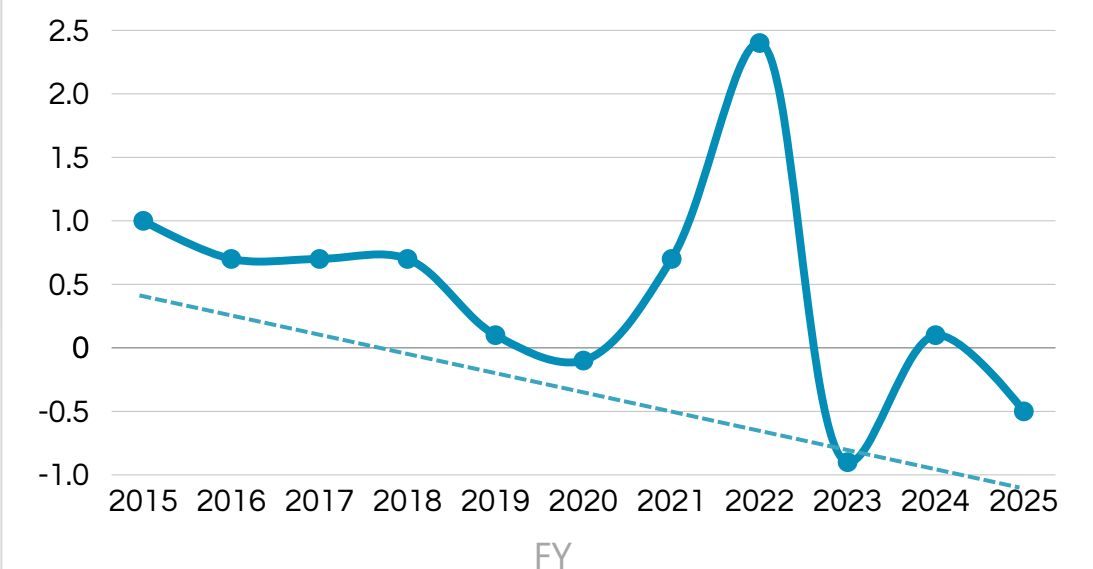
Australia's 20-year average labour productivity growth



²EnterpriseWorks analysis of ABS data

Our effort and investments are producing less output

Australia's estimated annual multifactor productivity growth



³EnterpriseWorks analysis of ABS data

“Australia's labour productivity growth is going from bad to worse”

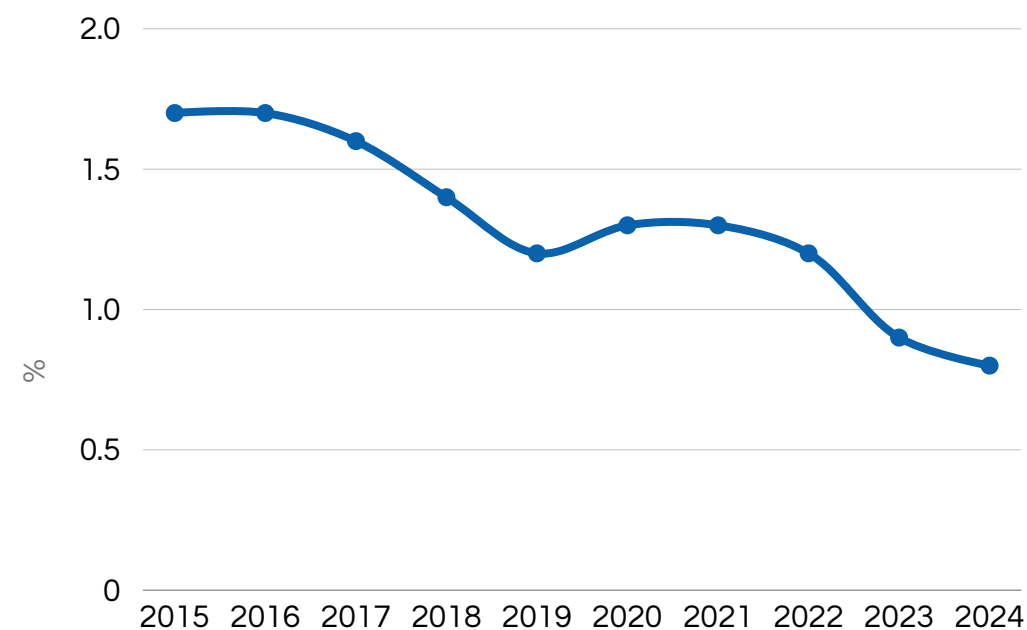
Dr Alex Robson, Deputy Chair, Productivity Commission, June 2026⁴

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

Productivity, stress and AI are now converging, making current ways of working unsustainable

Declining productivity growth

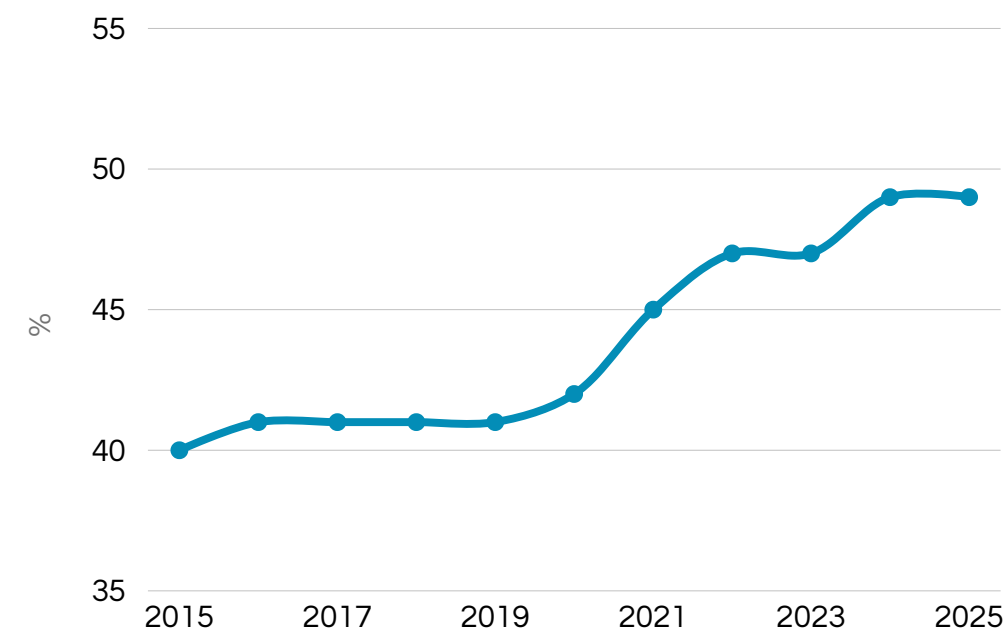
20-year average productivity growth²



²EnterpriseWorks analysis of ABS data

Rising stress at work

ANZ workers who reported feeling stress during a lot of the day yesterday⁵



⁵Gallup, 2026

Rapid acceleration of AI

Frontier AI computing capacity is doubling every 7 months⁶



⁶Epoch AI, 2026

Work has become more complex, fragmented and harder to coordinate over the past decade

The environment around work became more complex

- Cross-functional, hybrid and distributed work
- Climate, sustainability, cyber risk & supply chain resilience
- Increased regulation and board governance

Systems, data and alerts have been layered on

- Data spread across systems, email, chat and dashboards
- SaaS tools have multiplied faster than integration capacity
- New tools came with chat and notifications

Meetings and coordination have overtaken focused work

- More meetings and status updates
- More manual reporting and ad hoc requests
- Less time for focused work, strategy and learning

“We are working harder and longer but we are not working smarter”

Dr Alex Robson, Deputy Chair, Productivity Commission, June 2026⁴

Productive capacity is lost when strategy, systems and people are not connected

Strategy is clear but breaks down in execution

- Strategy loses clarity when it is not connected to daily work
- Too many priorities compete for the same capacity
- Changing priorities and rework consume capacity

83%

understand how their work connects to strategic priorities.¹

but only 51%

say their organisation organises work around the most important priorities.¹

Fragmented systems and data create manual work

- Workflows and data are spread across many tools
- Reporting is still too manual and often out of date
- Activity is measured more than outcomes and value

38%

spend significant time on manual work due to system constraints.¹

42%

spend significant time on manual reporting and presentations.¹

Meetings and coordination replace focused execution

- Meetings, chat and notifications consume the working week
- Leaders and teams spend more time aligning than delivering
- Focused work, learning and improvement are crowded out

45%

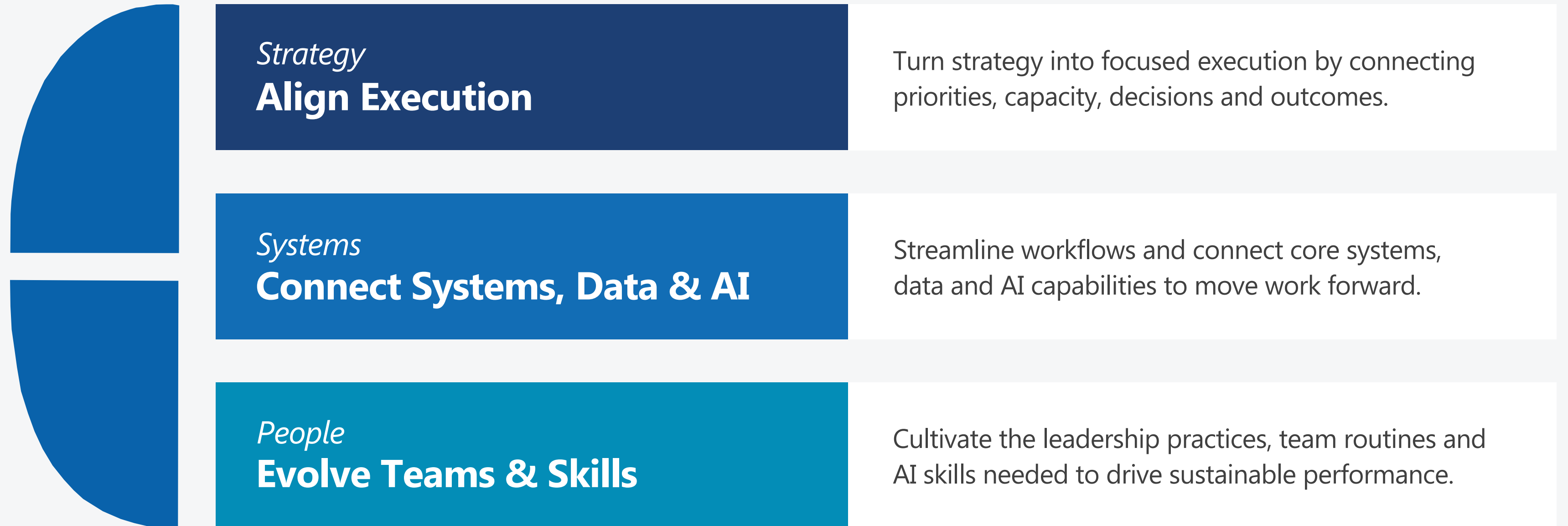
on average of the work week is spent in meetings.¹

only 44%

agree most meetings are necessary and move work forward.¹

¹EnterpriseWorks ANZ Survey, 2026

There is a clear path to higher productivity - by connecting strategy, systems and people



The next three sections turn each shift into practical action

Strategy is clear but breaks down in execution



**Strategy is clear,
but work is not
aligned**

83%

understand
how their
work connects
to strategy.¹

**only
51%**

say their work
is organised
around the
most important
priorities.¹

**Constant change
creates wasted
capacity**

49%

say changing requirements
or priorities often creates
rework or wasted effort.¹

**Priorities compete
for the same
capacity**

29%

do not agree that they
have clear visibility of their
workload and capacity.¹

**Leaders can't
align work they
can't see**

37%

lack the data and reporting
needed to make informed
decisions quickly.¹

¹EnterpriseWorks ANZ Survey, 2026

Five actions to align strategy with execution



1

Keep the operating model stable

Limit restructuring, maintain a consistent operating rhythm and allow work to flow through teams.

2

Create clarity, reduce distractions

Stop reports, updates and ad hoc requests that do not support a decision or action.

3

Choose fewer priorities, go deeper

Focus on the fewer priorities that matter most, make trade-offs clear, and give them time to land.

4

One front door, aligned to capacity

Bring all new work through one pathway, prioritised against capacity, so teams focus on the highest-value work.

5

Push decisions closer to the work

Give every priority one accountable owner, with clear decision rights and escalation points, so teams can move faster.

Fragmented systems and data are draining capacity

Disconnected systems create manual work

38%

of knowledge workers spend significant time on manual work due to system constraints.¹

¹EnterpriseWorks ANZ Survey, 2026

Reporting is still too manual due to fragmented data

42%

spend significant time on manual reporting and presentations.¹

The reporting burden is highest for senior leaders

62%

of senior leaders spend significant time each week on reports and slides.¹

Too many systems are adding cost and complexity

305 systems

are used across the average organisation.

only 15%

of the average annual SaaS spend is directly managed by IT.⁷

⁷Zylo, 2026

AI is freeing up capacity, but value has not yet scaled

**AI is already
reducing manual
work**

71%

of workers whose teams actively use AI say it has meaningfully reduced manual work.¹

**AI adoption has
not yet scaled**

48%

of knowledge workers say AI tools are available and actively used in their team.¹

¹EnterpriseWorks ANZ Survey, 2026

**Where AI
is already
helping**

- Summarising documents and long reports
- Meeting transcripts and action item generation
- Preparing performance and status reports
- Generating content, images and presentations
- Data analysis and research synthesis

**Barriers to
scaling AI
value**

- Limited access, skills and confidence
- Fragmented data that AI cannot access
- Risk concerns and cultural resistance
- Lack of governance and responsible AI foundations
- Workflows not designed for human-AI collaboration

Five actions to connect systems, data & AI

1

Simplify and connect workflows

Remove the handoffs between teams and systems that create re-keying, rework and risk.

2

One core system for each need

Define one core system for each need, so work is not duplicated or lost between tools.

3

Build one connected data layer

Create trusted, connected data to improve visibility, reporting and AI readiness.

4

Automate high-volume manual work

Target repetitive work that consumes capacity, so people can shift their time and skills to higher-value work.

5

Embed AI into core workflows

Build AI into core workflows and systems, so it becomes part of daily work, not a separate tool.

Our people don't have the time or skills to adapt to AI

Meetings and low-value work consume the week

45% on average of the work week is spent in meetings.¹

only 44% agree most meetings are necessary and move work forward.¹

¹EnterpriseWorks ANZ Survey, 2026

Leaders carry the heaviest meeting burden

~ 20 hours

is spent in meetings by leaders on average each week, 70% more than team members.¹

**based on a 38-hour week*

Organisations are struggling to keep pace with AI

over 50%

of Australian directors say AI adoption is moving faster than their organisation can absorb.⁸

⁸AICD, 2026

AI capability is not keeping pace with demand

88%

of employees expect major upskilling for the AI era, but only 36% feel properly trained at this stage.⁹

⁹Boston Consulting Group, 2026

Engagement is the engine for performance

Our research shows a direct link between stronger engagement and stronger long-term performance.

Our modelling identified 40 factors that sustain productivity, performance, engagement and ROI.

32 of those factors lift engagement, and every single one of them has a positive impact on performance.

The implication is clear: engagement is not a soft measure. It is a foundation for sustained performance.

23%

higher profitability among top-quartile engaged teams compared with bottom-quartile teams.¹⁰

¹⁰Gallup, 2024

22%

of managers are engaged globally - down from 27% a year ago, Gallup's largest single-year drop.⁵

⁵Gallup, 2026

Engagement uplift drives performance

Across the evidence base reviewed by EnterpriseWorks, we found no credible studies showing sustained performance gains without improved engagement.¹¹

¹¹EnterpriseWorks, 2026

Five actions to connect people to performance



1

Prioritise engagement and wellbeing

Treat engagement and wellbeing as essential foundations for sustained performance.

2

Help leaders guide their teams

Simplify priorities, reduce reporting and clarify team rhythms so leaders can build high-performing teams.

3

Protect focused work time

Create dedicated time for priority work and reduce reactive demand.

4

Build practical AI skills in daily work

Equip people with practical skills, confidence and guardrails to unlock the value of AI.

5

Reinvest freed capacity deliberately

Direct reclaimed time to priority work, better service, capability and sustainable workloads.

A more connected and productive future starts with the choices leaders make today

The path to sustainable productivity growth starts with practical choices leaders can make now.

Each shift is small on its own - but together they compound into an organisation where strategy, systems and people work together to lift performance, strengthen engagement and improve wellbeing.

	<i>Strategy</i> Align Execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the operating model stable• Create clarity, reduce distractions• Choose fewer priorities, go deeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One front door, aligned to capacity• Push decisions closer to the work
	<i>Systems</i> Connect Systems, Data & AI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simplify and connect workflows• One core system for each need• Build one connected data layer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Automate high-volume manual work• Embed AI into core workflows
	<i>People</i> Evolve Teams & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritise engagement and wellbeing• Help leaders guide their teams• Protect focused work time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build practical AI skills in daily work• Reinvest freed capacity deliberately

We help organisations improve the way they work to lift productivity and create the capacity for growth

Complimentary 30min Research & Action Plan Briefing



Executive Advisory

- Research and data insights relevant to your organisation
- Facilitated discussion on work design, productivity and AI
- Alignment on trade offs, priorities and action plan

Better Work Design Advisory

- Diagnostic and discovery to identify lost capacity
- Prioritised work-design opportunities to improve execution and productivity
- Recommendations and a sequenced 90-day action plan

Leader & Team Workshops

- Research-based, interactive sessions for leaders and teams
- Practical work-design tools to improve how work gets done
- Actions to lift capacity, productivity and AI readiness

About the Research



ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Independent research, supported by monday.com

This research report is informed by:

- A survey of 385 knowledge workers based in Australia and New Zealand, from large organisations with 500+ employees. Respondents were based in Australia (81%) and New Zealand (19%). Fieldwork was conducted between February and April 2026.
- A review of 125+ global and ANZ research sources, including government, academic, industry and workforce productivity research.
- Senior leader interviews across major industries, including financial services, telecommunications, FMCG, retail, logistics, government, education, media, property, professional services and energy.

The report was also informed by extensive market conversations with Australian leaders, practitioners and technology stakeholders, which helped shape the themes explored in the research.

The research was designed and conducted independently by EnterpriseWorks. Analysis, findings and recommendations are our own.

Thank you to monday.com for supporting this independent research and sharing our aspiration to create a better future of work.

EnterpriseWorks designed and conducted the research independently and retained full editorial control over the analysis, findings and recommendations.



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From work management and CRM to service and dev, every monday.com product runs on the same AI layer, automating tasks, running workflows, and helping teams deliver exponentially more with less effort.

REFERENCES

The 2026 Workforce Productivity Report is informed by independent survey research, leader interviews, market insight and external evidence. Key sources referenced in this Executive Insights edition of the report are listed below.

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Visit enterpriseworks.com.au for the full 2026 Workforce Productivity Research report and full list of references.

Research and publication

Researched, analysed and prepared by EnterpriseWorks Pty Ltd, drawing on the 2026 ANZ Knowledge Worker Survey, Senior Leader Interviews, and publicly available secondary research cited throughout. Sponsored by monday.com. EnterpriseWorks retained full editorial independence in the design, analysis and preparation of this research; the findings and views expressed are EnterpriseWorks' own and do not necessarily reflect those of monday.com.

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Unlocking productivity and
workforce potential

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The AI work platform that
transforms how businesses run