

FSC

SECTOR REPORT



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE FUTURE OF FINANCIAL SERVICES IN NEW ZEALAND

Financial Services
Council NZ

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FOREWORD

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the world around us at an unprecedented pace, and financial services are at the forefront of this transformation. From streamlining operations to enhancing customer experiences, the potential of AI is both significant and exciting. However, as this report sets out, the real challenge we face is not just technical capability – it is about perception and trust.

This research highlights a nuanced and evolving relationship between consumers and AI. While acceptance of AI is growing, trust in it remains fragile and conditional. Consumers are engaging with AI, but they are doing so cautiously. They see the benefits, particularly in improving efficiency and access, yet they remain concerned about fairness, transparency, privacy and control – especially when AI begins to influence decisions that matter most in their lives.

Consumers appear more comfortable with AI when it supports them, simplifies complexity and enhances safety. But they are far less comfortable when AI replaces human judgement or operates without clear accountability.

This distinction is critical for our industry.

For financial services providers, the implications are clear. Building trust in AI will require more than innovation. It will require a deliberate focus on transparency, governance and consumer empowerment. It will require keeping people at the centre of decision-making, working with AI to enhance human judgment rather than replacing it when it comes to decision making. And it will require ongoing effort to ensure that all consumers, not just the most confident or digitally engaged, can benefit from these advancements.

This report provides an important foundation for that work. It brings together global insight, New Zealand perspectives and sector-specific evidence to better understand as AI becomes more integrated into our work.

This is a moment in time in the AI journey and the opportunity ahead is significant. Implemented well, AI can improve outcomes for customers, increase access to financial services and support better decision-making. But realising this potential will depend on our ability to build trust in our use of AI consistently, transparently and over time.



Kirk Hope
Chief Executive
Officer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



AI is rapidly transforming financial services globally and in New Zealand, yet consumer trust in AI and its capabilities is not keeping pace with adoption. This report brings together global evidence, national sentiment and sector-specific findings to understand how trust in AI is forming.

A consistent picture emerges. Many consumers are not rejecting AI. They recognise its benefits, particularly in improving efficiency and reducing friction. However, they remain cautious, especially when AI influences decisions that directly affect outcomes.

Globally, trust in AI sits at just under half of the population, with only 49% expressing confidence.¹

In New Zealand, this trust level is even lower, with only 34% willing to trust AI despite broader acceptance of its use.² Within financial services, trust becomes even more conditional, varying significantly depending on how AI is applied.³

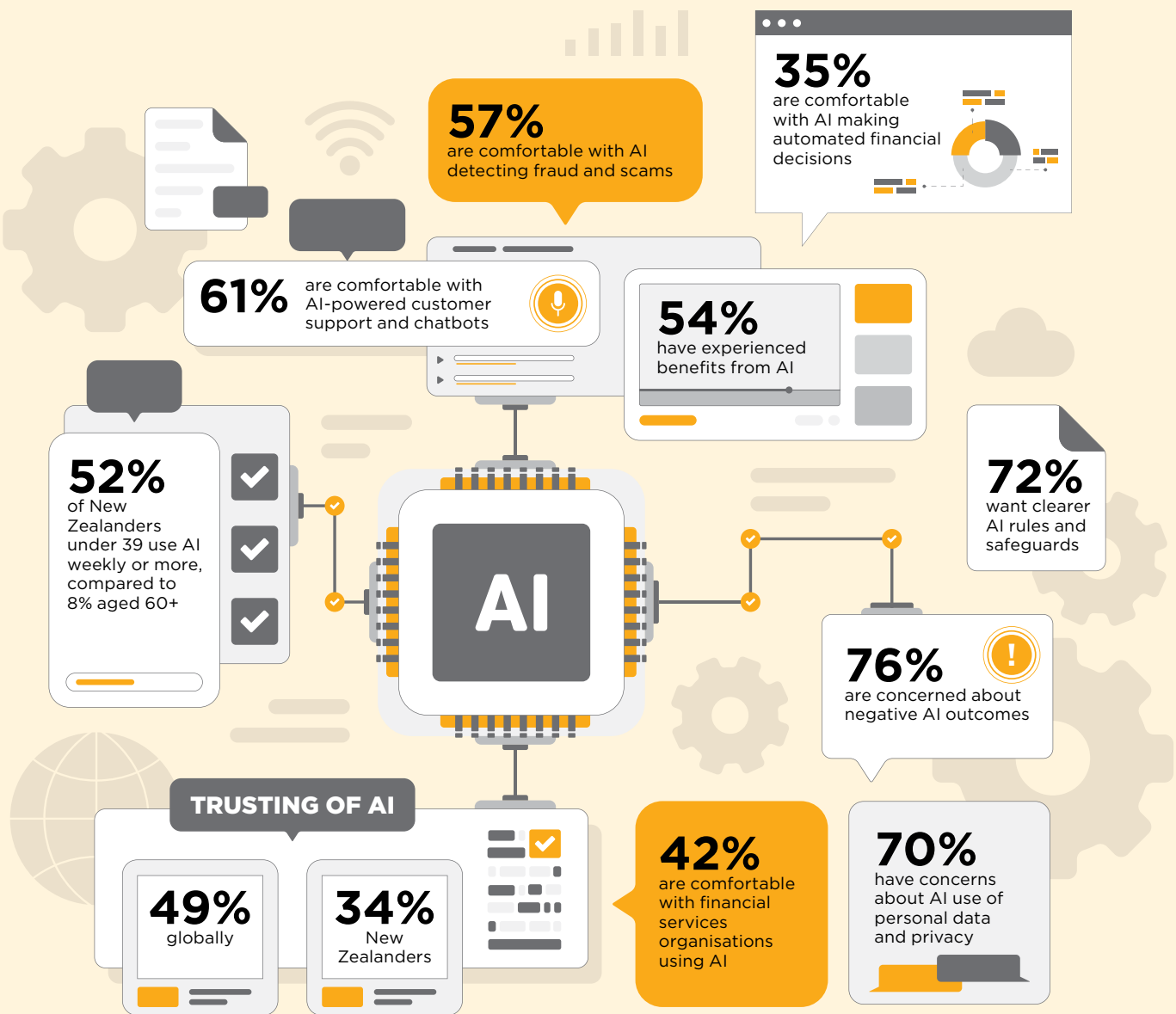
The defining theme across all findings is that trust in AI use is not a single decision. It is contextual, evolving and dependent on transparency, fairness and human oversight.

As AI becomes more embedded in financial systems, the ability to build and sustain trust in its capabilities will determine its long-term success.

¹2025 Edelman Trust Barometer [<https://www.edelman.com/>, accessed June 2026]. ²KPMG Trust, attitudes and use of artificial intelligence, A global study 2025, accessed June 2026. ³FSC Consumer AI Research 2026.

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KEY FINDINGS



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A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



THE TRUST CHALLENGE IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

While New Zealand consumers demonstrate a cautious and conditional acceptance of AI, this dynamic is not unique. Globally, trust in AI is emerging as one of the defining challenges for governments, technology companies and financial institutions alike. The international evidence shows that the tension observed in New Zealand is part of a much broader structural shift of a growing gap between technological advancement and public confidence.

A GLOBAL TRUST PLATEAU

According to the Edelman Trust Barometer,⁴ globally, trust in AI remains fragile and uneven. On average, only 49% of people trust AI, placing global sentiment almost exactly at the midpoint between trust and distrust.⁵

This mirrors a trust plateau that the research has seen in New Zealand,⁶ where consumers are neither fully confident nor fully resistant. Instead, they are navigating uncertainty and forming conditional views based on how AI is used.

However, trust levels do vary between regions. Developing economies tend to exhibit higher optimism and acceptance, while developed markets such as the United States, United Kingdom and Australia have experienced notable declines in trust over recent years.

This highlights an important global pattern in that familiarity with advanced technology does not necessarily lead to greater trust. In fact, in more mature digital markets, increased exposure to AI appears to have heightened awareness of risks.

USE OF AI IN BUSINESS

A critical dimension of global sentiment, according to Edelman, is how consumers view AI when it is deployed by businesses, finding that concern seems to be more pronounced.

Only 44% of respondents globally say they are comfortable with businesses using AI, meaning that a majority are either uncomfortable or uncertain.

This aligns closely with the findings from the latest Financial Services Council consumer sentiment research into use of AI financial services,⁷ where comfort drops when AI is used in ways that directly impact customer outcomes. The research suggests consumers appear to distinguish between AI as a tool and AI as a decision-maker.

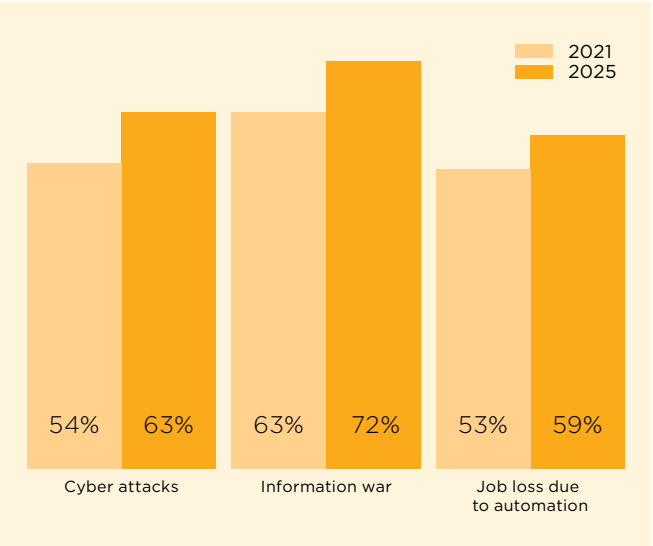
Concern is further reinforced by declining enthusiasm. Globally, just 27% say they actively embrace the growing use of AI, with sentiment declining compared to previous years. Together, these findings suggest that, while AI adoption is accelerating, public confidence is not keeping pace.

RISING FEARS AND PERCEIVED RISKS

Global data also shows that concerns about technology and AI specifically are increasing over time. Since 2021, fears related to technology have grown significantly across multiple dimensions.

These rising concerns indicate that consumers increasingly associate technology with systemic risk. AI is not viewed in isolation but as part of a broader ecosystem that includes data security, misinformation and labour market disruption.

Figure 1: Growth in technology-related concerns (global)



Source: 2025 Edelman Trust Barometer [https://www.edelman.com/], accessed June 2026

INEQUALITY IN TRUST: DEMOGRAPHICS AND GLOBAL DIVIDES

Trust in AI is not evenly distributed across populations. Significant differences exist by age, income and geography. Globally, younger individuals and higher-income groups are more likely to trust AI, while older and lower-income groups show significantly lower levels of trust.

There is also a stark geopolitical divide. In some cases, trust levels in countries such as China are up to 40% higher than in Western markets. This creates a fragmented global landscape where attitudes toward AI vary dramatically depending on economic development, political systems and digital maturity.

THE ROLE OF GRIEVANCE AND SOCIAL TRUST

One of the most important global insights is the link between broader societal sentiment and trust in AI. The Edelman data shows that individuals who feel a stronger sense of grievance or dissatisfaction with institutions are significantly less likely to trust AI.

For example, trust in AI drops sharply among those with high levels of societal grievance, and comfort with AI use by businesses falls from 50% among low-grievance groups to just 29% among high-grievance groups.

This suggests that trust in AI is not only a technological issue but also a reflection of broader trust in institutions, fairness and economic systems.

A GLOBAL TRUST DEFICIT

The global data makes one point clear. The challenge facing AI is not technological, it is societal.

Across markets, consumers are grappling with how to integrate a powerful but opaque technology into systems that require fairness, accountability and human judgement.

For financial services, this means that the path forward is not simply to deploy AI more widely but to design it more responsibly. Trust will be built through transparency, governance and demonstrated outcomes, not through capability alone.

In this context, New Zealand is not an outlier. It is a clear reflection of a broader global reality that AI’s future will be determined not by what it can do but by whether people believe it should.

⁴2025 Edelman Trust Barometer [https://www.edelman.com/], accessed June 2026. ⁵2025 Edelman Trust Barometer [https://www.edelman.com/], accessed June 2026. ⁶KPMG Trust, attitudes and use of artificial intelligence, A global study 2025, accessed June 2026. ⁷FSC Consumer AI Research 2026.

CASE STUDY 1

AIA NEW ZEALAND: BUILDING TRUST IN AI THROUGH HUMAN-CENTRED IMPLEMENTATION

Leading life insurer AIA New Zealand recently introduced AI-powered support to enhance customer and employee experiences with appropriate guardrails and human oversight. At a time when New Zealand consumers are most comfortable with AI supporting customer service and staff, rather than making decisions autonomously, AIA has focused on using AI to augment team capability.

To modernise its contact centre, AIA implemented an AI-powered platform integrated with its CRM system, replacing legacy systems with a unified customer service environment. AI capabilities such as real-time transcription, sentiment analysis, automated call summaries and workflow support help employees spend less time on administration and more time supporting customers and advisers.

This approach aligns closely with this FSC sector research, which found consumers are significantly more comfortable with AI-powered customer support (61%) and AI supporting staff decisions (52%) than with automated decision-making (35%). By keeping employees at the centre of customer interactions while using AI to improve efficiency and insight, AIA has implemented AI in a way that reflects consumer expectations and builds trust.

The outcomes speak for themselves. AIA achieved a more than 20% reduction in average call handling time, a 7% improvement in customer satisfaction, lower call abandonment rates and reduced operating costs. AI-powered coaching and quality assurance tools also help provide real-time feedback and support to frontline teams, improving both employee performance and customer outcomes.

AIA's experience demonstrates that successful AI adoption is not simply about technology. By combining automation with strong change management, employee engagement and ongoing human oversight, the insurer has shown how AI can improve service delivery while maintaining the trust and confidence of both customers and staff.

This reflects a key finding of this research, that trust grows when AI enhances human capability and operates within clear and transparent guardrails.

Find out more.

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NEW ZEALAND LENS



**TRUST, CONCERN
AND CONDITIONAL
ACCEPTANCE OF AI**

The New Zealand perspective on AI reflects a an often-cautious attitude, shaped by both optimism about benefits and concern about risks. While global findings highlight a broad trust deficit in AI, the New Zealand data shows an even more restrained position one where trust remains limited, expectations are high and confidence is still forming.

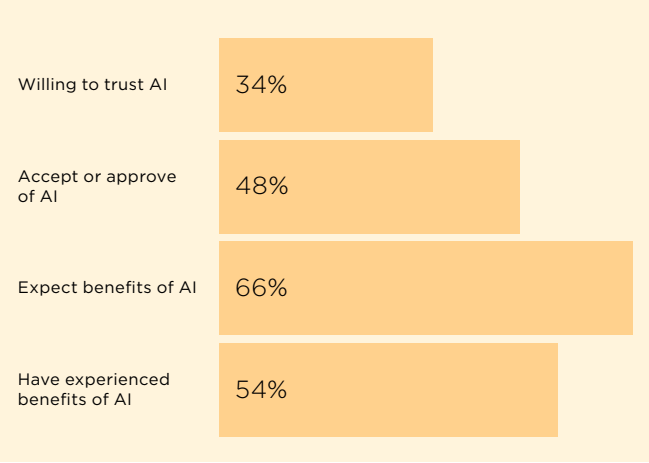
A LOW-TRUST, HIGH-AWARENESS ENVIRONMENT

According to a joint global study by KPMG and the University of Melbourne into trust and AI, the New Zealand AI landscape is defined by relatively low levels of trust. Only 34% of New Zealanders say they are willing to trust AI, signalling a clear scepticism towards the technology.⁸

At the same time, nearly half of consumers (48%) say they accept or approve of AI, suggesting that, while trust is low, outright rejection is not widespread.

This creates a paradox. New Zealanders recognise the value of AI and expect it to deliver benefits, yet they remain hesitant to fully trust it. This disconnect between expectation and trust is a defining feature of the local environment.

Figure 2: Trust and acceptance of AI in New Zealand

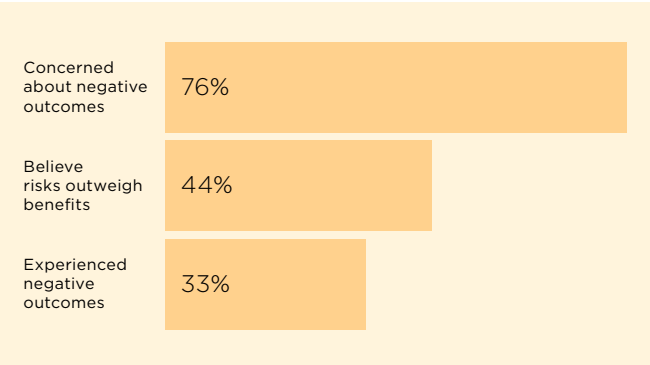


Source: KPMG Trust, attitudes and use of artificial intelligence, A global study 2025, accessed June 2026

A STRONG PERCEPTION OF RISK

The cautious stance towards AI is influenced by perceptions of risk. The study found a significant majority of New Zealanders express concern about the negative impacts of AI, with 76% reporting concern about potential negative outcomes.

Figure 3: AI risk perceptions (New Zealand)



Source: KPMG Trust, attitudes and use of artificial intelligence, A global study 2025, accessed June 2026

Moreover, 44% believe that the risks of AI outweigh its benefits, indicating that a portion of the population views AI as threatening, not positive.

BENEFITS ARE RECOGNISED, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO BUILD TRUST

Despite these concerns, New Zealanders recognise the value AI can bring. Approximately 66% expect AI to deliver benefits, and more than half (54%) say they have already experienced positive outcomes.

The most reported benefit is improved efficiency, with 69% noting that AI reduces time spent on repetitive tasks.

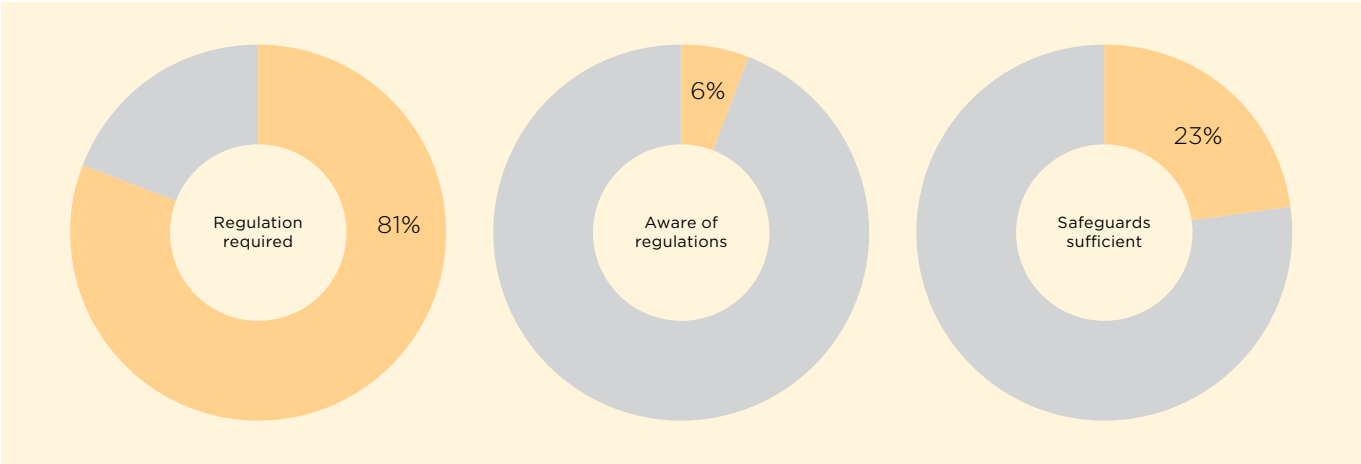
However, in line with global perspectives, these benefits are not yet sufficient to overcome underlying scepticism. Instead, they coexist with concerns, reinforcing the idea that New Zealanders are weighing both the positive and negative dimensions of AI simultaneously.

A STRONG DEMAND FOR REGULATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

One of the clearest insights from the New Zealand data is the strong expectation for governance. Public sentiment strongly favours regulation and oversight, indicating that trust will not develop organically – it must be actively built through clear frameworks.

The gap between expectation and awareness is particularly striking. While most consumers want regulation, only a small minority are aware of existing policies. This suggests that trust is being undermined not only by perceived risks but also by a lack of visible governance, if indeed it exists.

Figure 4: AI governance expectations (New Zealand)



Source: KPMG Trust, attitudes and use of artificial intelligence, A global study 2025, accessed June 2026

⁸KPMG Trust, attitudes and use of artificial intelligence, A global study 2025, accessed June 2026.

CASE STUDY 2

APEX AI GOVERNANCE: TURNING INNOVATION INTO TRUST

Artificial Intelligence is transforming financial services, helping organizations improve client experiences, strengthen risk management, automate operations, and unlock new insights from data. But as AI adoption accelerates, one question matters more than ever.

How do you innovate while maintaining trust?

At Apex Group, we believe the answer is simple: **strong AI governance.**

AI governance is not about slowing innovation. It is about creating the confidence to innovate responsibly, allowing organizations to move faster while protecting clients, data, and their reputation.

The challenges facing financial services

Across the industry, organizations face common AI challenges:

- Protecting sensitive and regulated data
- Maintaining human accountability for decisions
- Ensuring transparency and explainability
- Meeting evolving regulatory expectations
- Balancing innovation with appropriate oversight

The technology may be new, but the objective is familiar: deliver better outcomes while effectively managing risk.

How Apex approaches AI governance

At Apex, governance is embedded throughout the AI lifecycle—from idea to deployment and ongoing monitoring.

Our approach is built on four principles:

Accountability – Every AI solution has clear ownership and defined responsibilities.

Human oversight – AI supports decision-making; people remain accountable for outcomes.

Risk-based controls – Governance is proportionate to the level of risk and impact.

Continuous monitoring – AI solutions are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective, secure, and aligned with business objectives.

A real-world example

Recently, Apex assessed an AI solution designed to improve employee productivity and access to information.

Rather than focusing solely on technology, we brought together business leaders, risk specialists, privacy teams, legal, information security, and governance experts to evaluate the solution from multiple perspectives.

Key questions included:

- How is sensitive information protected?
- What level of human oversight is required?
- How are outputs validated?
- What controls prevent misuse?
- How is success monitored after deployment?

The result was not additional bureaucracy; it was a better solution. Clear ownership, stronger controls, enhanced monitoring, and greater stakeholder confidence enabled the capability to move forward responsibly.

This is governance at its best: **enabling innovation, not preventing it.**

Why governance matters

The most successful AI programs are not necessarily those with the most advanced technology. They are the ones that clients, regulators, and stakeholders trust.

Strong governance helps organisations:

- Adopt AI with confidence
- Demonstrate transparency and accountability
- Adapt to evolving regulations
- Scale innovation safely
- Deliver sustainable business value

Looking ahead

AI will continue to reshape financial services, creating new opportunities for growth, efficiency, and client value. Organisations that succeed will be those that combine innovation with responsibility.

At Apex Group, we view AI governance as a strategic enabler, not a compliance exercise. By embedding trust, accountability, and oversight into every stage of the AI lifecycle, we help ensure that AI delivers meaningful outcomes while maintaining the confidence of our clients and stakeholders.

Because in financial services, trust has always been our most valuable asset. In the age of AI, it is more important than ever.

Find out more.

06

A FOCUS ON NEW ZEALAND FINANCIAL SERVICES



CONTEXTUAL
DIFFERENCES BY USE
CASE AND CONSUMER
EXPERIENCE

The global, New Zealand AI trust studies and alongside the latest Financial Services Council research reveal a highly consistent underlying story, but with important contextual differences driven by sector, use case and consumer experience.

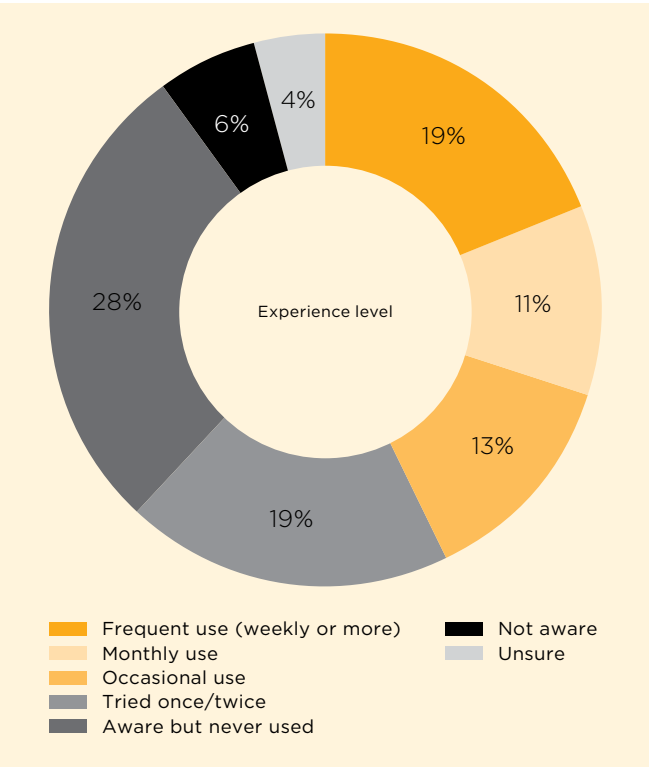
While perspectives point to a fragile and conditional trust environment, the latest financial services consumer sentiment data shows how these attitudes become more nuanced and more polarised when AI is applied, specifically within financial services.

AI EXPERIENCE: A MARKET IN TRANSITION

New Zealand consumers are no longer at the awareness stage with AI. According to the latest FSC research, most New Zealanders have encountered AI tools, but their level of use varies significantly.

This data identifies three clear groups. Around one-third of consumers are not using AI at all, another group is experimenting and about one in five are using AI regularly. The largest experience level segment spans across usage, with frequent monthly or occasional use totalling 43%.

Figure 5: Experience with AI tools in New Zealand

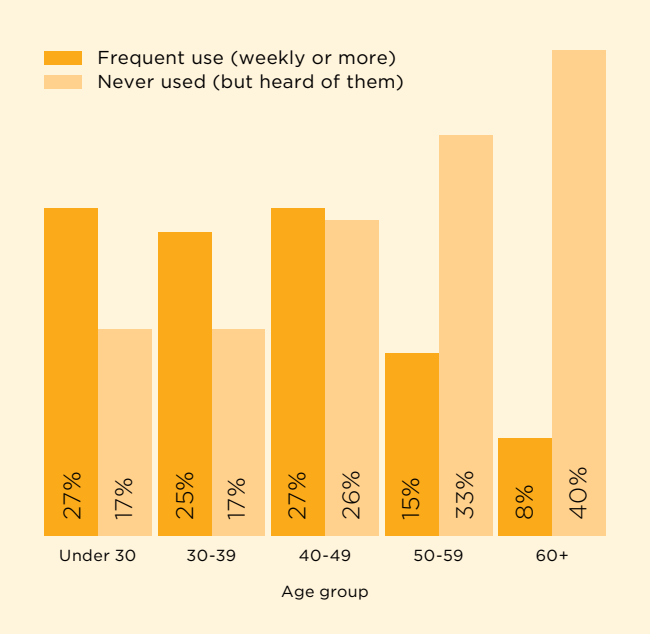


Source: FSC Consumer AI Research 2026, n=2,000

USAGE IS DRIVEN BY AGE

Reflecting global sentiment, age is the biggest driver of experience. Younger consumers are far more likely to use AI frequently, while older groups are more likely to avoid it, identifying a clear generational divide.

Figure 6: AI usage by age in New Zealand



Source: FSC Consumer AI Research 2026, n=2,000

AI experience in New Zealand is uneven but growing. A smaller group of regular users is leading adoption, while a large portion of consumers have yet to engage.

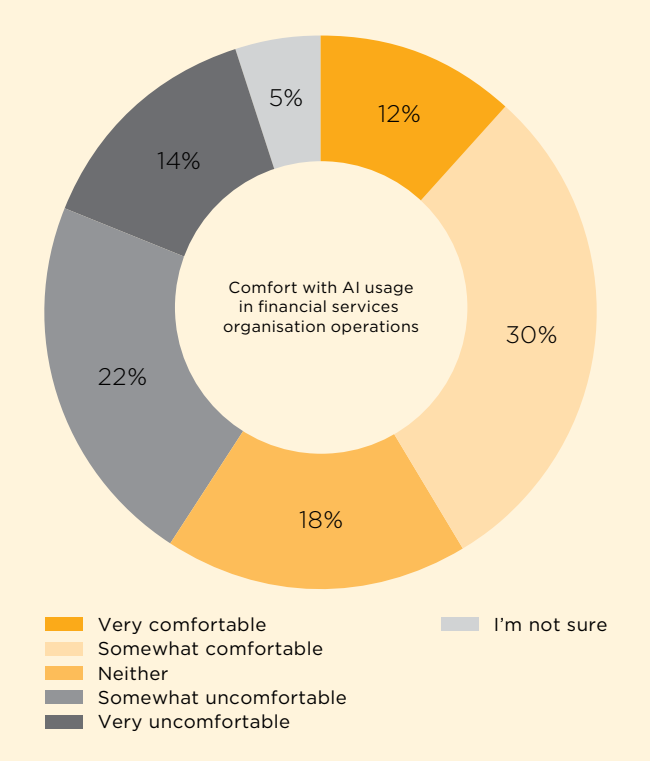
This matters because experience shapes trust. Without using AI, consumers rely on assumptions. With use, they build familiarity and confidence.

5.1 NEW ZEALANDERS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Edelman⁹ and KPMG¹⁰ research highlights the difference in New Zealand attitudes towards AI. While 48% of consumers accept or approve of AI, only 34% say they are willing to trust it, pointing to a distinct ‘trust deficit’ of AI where awareness and acceptance do not translate into confidence. This reflects a population that recognises the potential of AI but remains cautious about its implications and use.

This pattern is closely reflected in the FSC findings within financial services, where 42% of consumers report being comfortable with AI, 36% are uncomfortable and the remainder are neutral. Together, these results suggest a consistent dynamic that the majority of consumers are not resisting AI outright but are engaging with it selectively and with caution. Across datasets, AI operates within a trust negotiation zone, where legitimacy is still being established rather than assumed.

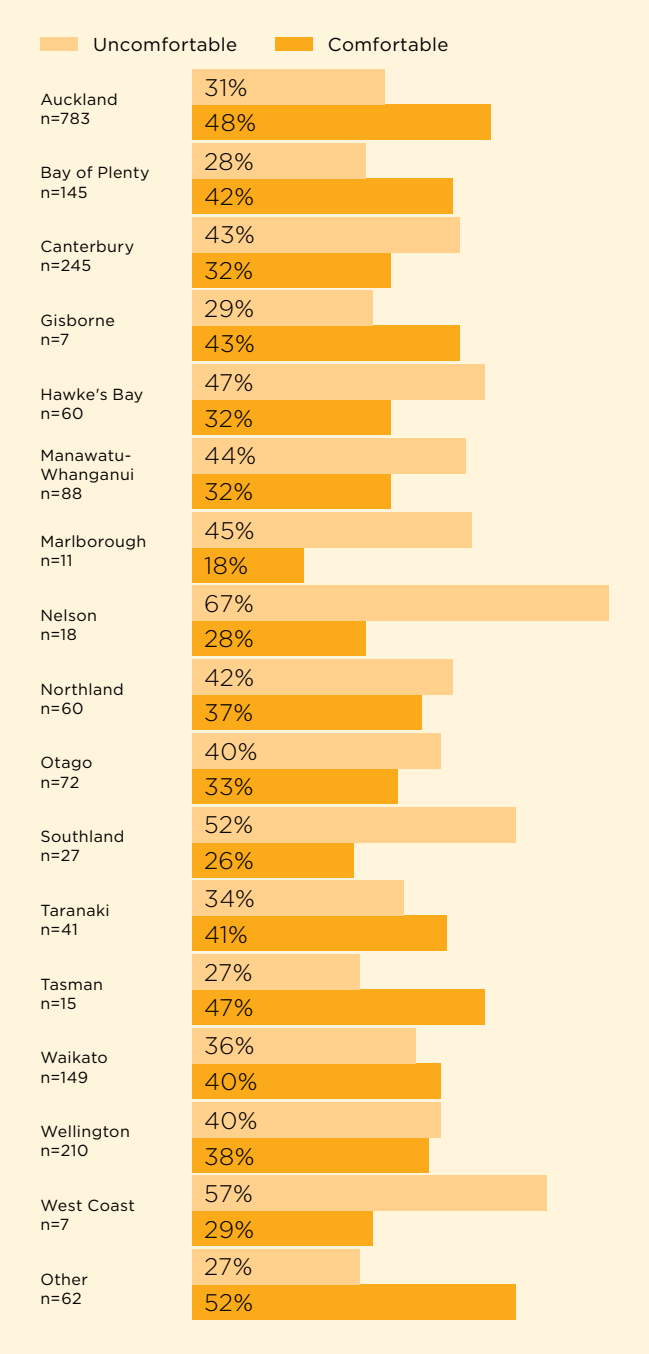
Figure 7: How comfortable are you with financial services organisations using AI in their operations?



Source: FSC Consumer AI Research 2026, n=2,000.

When the regional split was investigated, we can see that levels of comfort change depending on the region.

Figure 8: Overall, how comfortable are you with financial services organisations using AI in their operations [by region]?



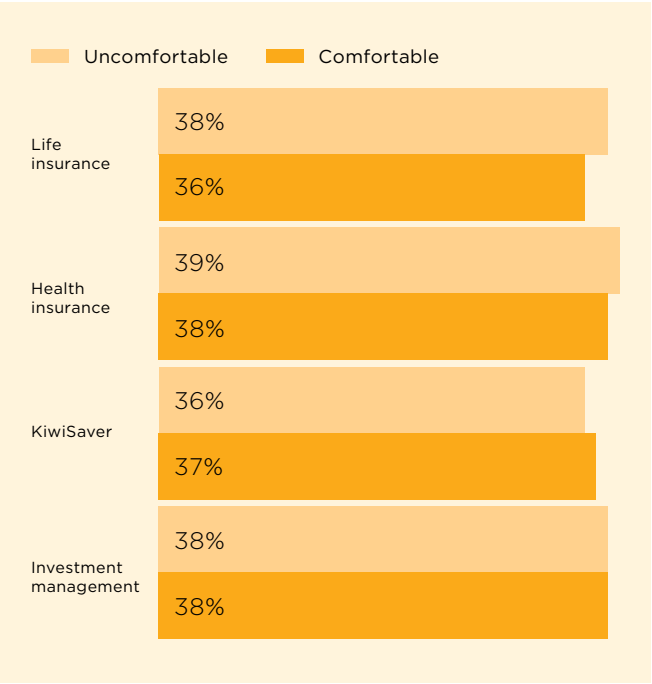
Source: FSC Consumer AI Research 2026, n=2,000

⁹2025 Edelman Trust Barometer [https://www.edelman.com/], accessed June 2026.
¹⁰KPMG Trust, attitudes and use of artificial intelligence, A global study 2025, accessed June 2026.

5.2 COMFORT WITH AI USE AT PRODUCT LEVEL

Consumer comfort with AI shows low but little variation across financial products, indicating that attitudes are not being shaped by the type of product but by broader perceptions of AI use in financial services itself. Across life insurance, health insurance, KiwiSaver and investment management, comfort and discomfort levels remain balanced, with no category standing out as significantly more trusted or more resisted.

Figure 9: Comfort with AI use by product



Source: FSC Consumer AI Research 2026, n=2,000

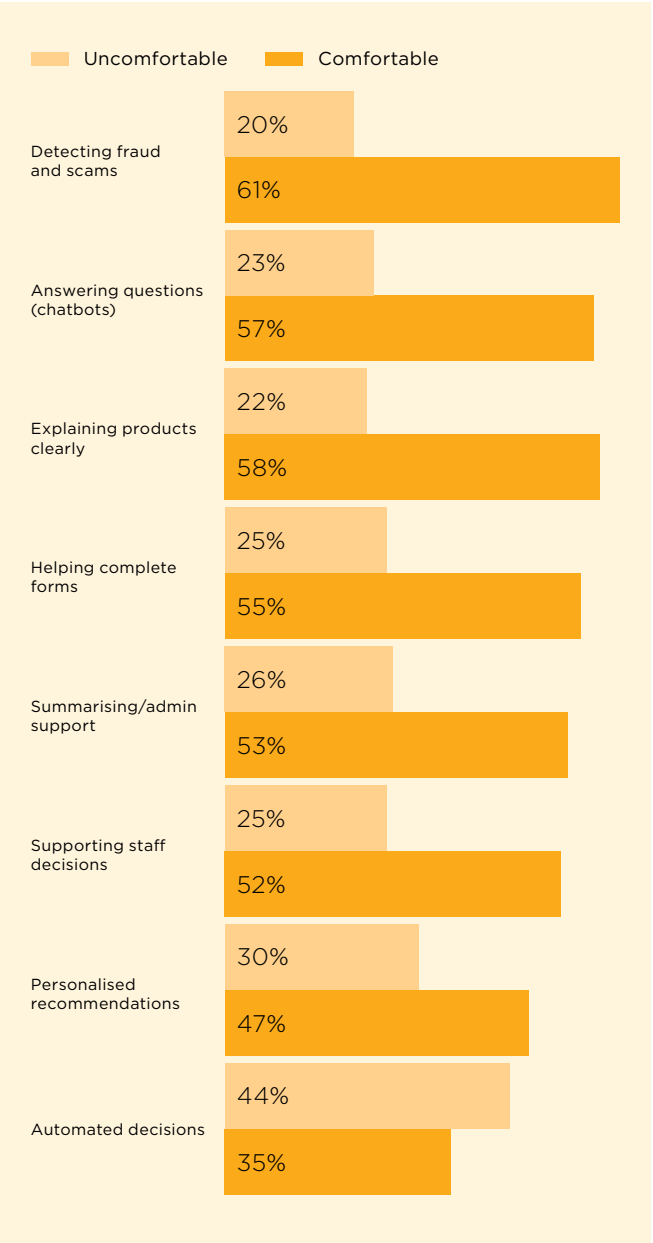
In each case, around one in three consumers are comfortable, one in three are uncomfortable and the remaining portion are neutral or unsure. This consistency suggests that consumer attitudes towards AI are still generic rather than product-specific.

Trust, therefore, is not yet differentiated at the product level. Instead, consumers are applying a broad, cautious lens to AI across all financial services, reinforcing the idea that improving trust will require addressing underlying concerns about transparency, fairness and control rather than focusing on individual products in isolation.

5.3 COMFORT WITH AI USE IN FINANCIAL SERVICES PROVISION

Consumer comfort with AI varies much more by how it is used than by product. The data shows a pattern that AI is widely accepted in supportive roles but becomes less trusted when it takes on decision-making or more personalised functions.

Figure 10: Comfort with AI by process



Source: FSC Consumer AI Research 2026, n=2,000

AI is supported when it helps customers understand information, reduces effort or improves safety, particularly in areas such as fraud detection and customer service. In these cases, comfort levels are well above 50%, indicating acceptance of AI as a useful tool.

However, trust drops sharply when AI begins to influence outcomes. Automated decision-making, such as claims approvals or eligibility, attracts the lowest comfort (35%) and the highest level of discomfort (44%). Personalised recommendations also see lower trust, reflecting concerns about data use and fairness.

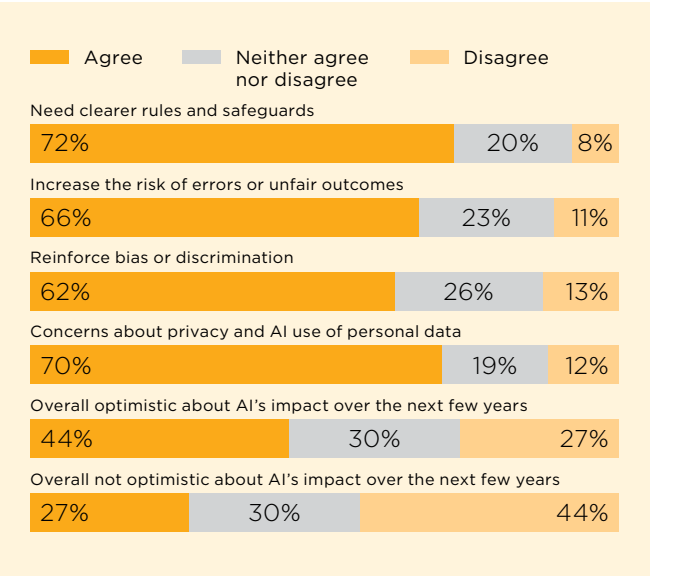
While global and New Zealand studies show general attitudes towards AI, the latest FSC research data demonstrates that trust is highly contextual. Consumers are not making a single judgement about AI – they are evaluating it based on the role it plays.

This suggests that trust lowers when AI shifts from support to control. Consumers are comfortable with AI assisting them but far less willing to accept AI making decisions that directly affect their financial outcomes.

5.4 PERCEPTION OF RISK

Consumer attitudes in New Zealand are shaped by perceptions of risk, with clear majorities expressing concern across multiple dimensions of AI. The data shows that these concerns are not marginal – they are widely held, reinforcing the cautious stance towards AI in New Zealand.

Figure 11: Perceptions of AI risk in New Zealand



Source: FSC Consumer AI Research 2026, n=2,000

Concerns particularly around privacy, fairness and safeguards are high. While nearly half of respondents express some optimism about AI's future impact, this sits alongside equally strong concern, creating a tension between opportunity and risk.

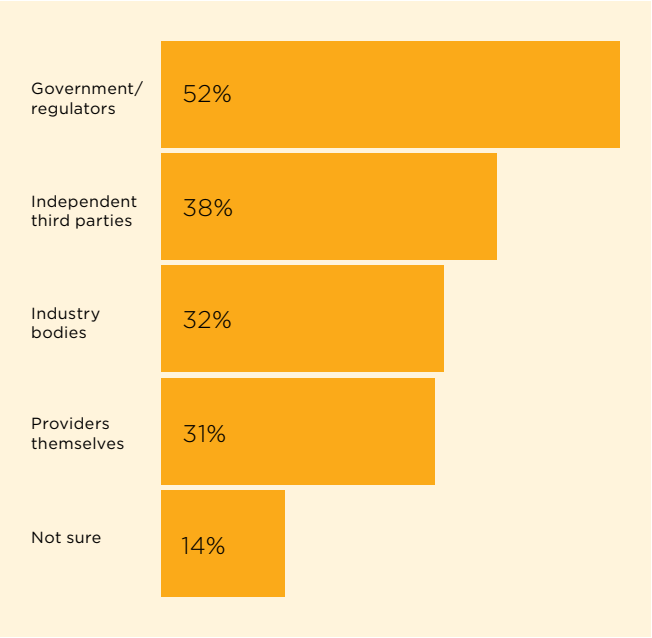
This aligns closely with broader New Zealand and global findings, where risk is a central driver of trust in AI use. However, there is an important distinction in how these risks are framed. While global studies often highlight broader societal concerns such as loss of human connection or misinformation, the latest FSC research shows how these translate into specific concerns including fairness, bias and data use.

The implication is that risk is not an abstract concept. Rather, it is shaping how consumers evaluate AI in real-world contexts – in this case, financial services. As a result, building trust in AI use will depend not only on demonstrating benefits but on actively addressing these core concerns around transparency, fairness and control.

5.5 MANAGING RISK AND TRUST

Although New Zealanders look to government and regulators to take responsibility for AI, there is equal support for third parties, industry bodies and providers taking responsibility for ensuring robust guardrails around AI use in financial services, indicating that a partnership approach between industry and government could improve impact in consumers, trust in AI.

Figure 12: Preferred responsibility for AI governance



Source: FSC Consumer AI Research 2026, n=2,000

Overall, this aligns closely with broader New Zealand and global findings, which show overwhelming support for stronger AI guardrails. However, the latest FSC research adds an important layer of insight by identifying who consumers trust to provide that oversight.

While global research highlights a gap between the desire for regulation and awareness of existing safeguards, the financial services data suggests that consumers expect governance to be external, structured and credible.

This means governance is not a secondary consideration. Rather, it is central to building trust. Consumers do not expect AI to evolve responsibly without governance, and confidence will depend on the presence of clear responsibilities.

5.6 CAPABILITY, CONFIDENCE AND BEHAVIOUR

Trust in AI is closely linked to consumer capability and confidence, but the two datasets highlight different dimensions of this relationship. At a national level, New Zealanders report relatively low levels of AI literacy, with only 36% feeling they understand AI well and 24% having received any training.¹¹

In contrast, the FSC data¹² shows that trust is strongly tied not just to AI knowledge but to broader financial confidence. Consumers who feel confident in making financial decisions show higher comfort with AI (around 60%) compared to only 18–22% among those with low confidence. Together, these findings demonstrate that trust is not just about understanding AI – it is about feeling empowered in the context where AI is being applied.

A further distinction emerges between perception and behaviour. The New Zealand and global datasets primarily reflect what consumers *think* about AI, while the latest FSC research reveals how they act when interacting with it.

In practice, consumers are willing to use AI for convenience and efficiency but become more cautious when it affects outcomes. This behaviour reinforces a consistent theme across both datasets in that trust is anchored in maintaining human control.

Concerns about the loss of human interaction are prominent nationally, while in financial services trust declines when AI replaces human oversight. Collectively, this highlights that trust in AI is not abstract it is shaped by experience, context and human oversight.

CASE STUDY 3
NOVIGI: RESPONSIBLE AI IN SUPERANNUATION

Superannuation: Guardrails and Agentic AI

For the sector, guardrails do not have to trade off against the velocity of deploying agentic AI. By putting the right controls in place early such as staged approvals, risk-based reviews, and a clear point of human accountability, a fund can adopt AI with more confidence. It also helps members trust that a person, not just a model, remains accountable for decisions that affect their retirement outcomes.

As one Australian industry superannuation fund got ready to use agentic AI to support its members, it recognised that the more autonomous the technology became, the more important strong guardrails were. Instead of rolling out agentic tools first and tightening controls later, the fund built its governance model upfront.

The AI policy was based on six key Responsible AI principles: clear accountability, reduced bias, greater transparency, protected privacy, strong security, and reliable AI solutions. The framework also makes it clear where human oversight, intervention, and escalation are required, so no automated outcome that affects a member moves forward without a clear human checkpoint.

In practice, every AI use case, no matter how small or large, now moves through a staged lifecycle from idea through to retirement. During discovery, the risk created by a use case is assessed. Low-risk personal productivity and general data use cases can move quickly, while any use case that could affect a high-value or high-impact member outcome, such as advice, claims, investment-adjacent processes, or the use of sensitive data, must go through a detailed risk assessment and show that the mitigation plan and controls are strong enough before moving into delivery.

There are several stage gates to clear during the development stage. For instance, evaluation results have to be documented and approved by the project sponsor to ensure they satisfy the success criteria and security assessment has to be cleared before deployment.

Once in operations, ongoing monitoring and AI observability are required. Monitoring helps minimise AI downtime, while observability helps the fund understand how the AI is behaving, what decisions it is making, and whether it is still performing as expected.

As a small example, when Claims team members submit new AI ideas for assessment, the framework ensures low-risk ideas can move ahead quickly, allowing staff to experiment in Copilot, while higher-risk ideas go through a detailed risk assessment before staff can continue. In both cases, the solutions are shared with the AI team for review, development, and operationalisation.

The fund also adopted a one-stop platform to help turn the AI policy into practice and safely manage AI use cases from early concept through to scaled operational solutions.

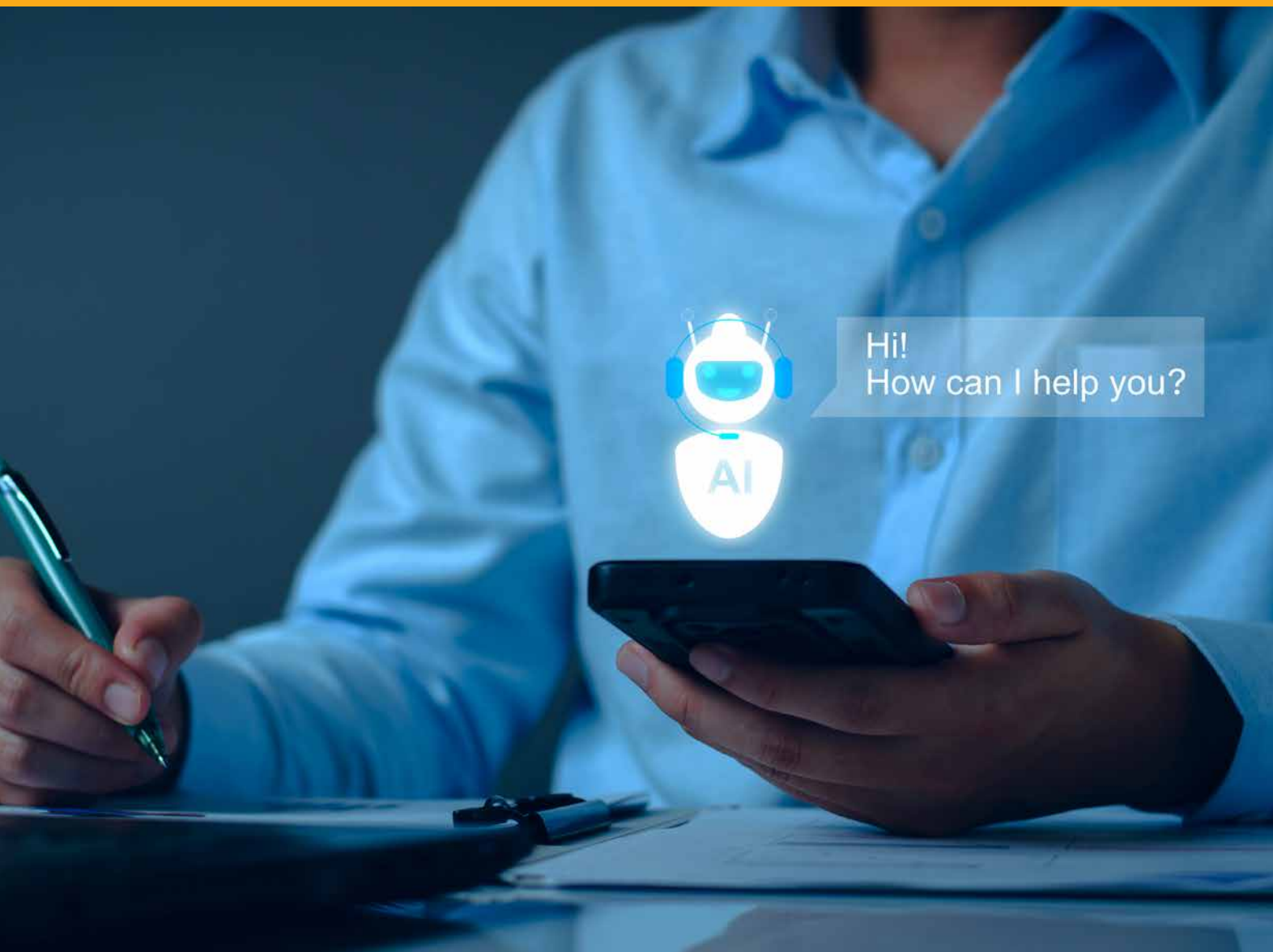
By setting up guardrails early, the fund created a safe and secure foundation for becoming an AI-enabled organisation. It has also given the fund more confidence and helped it move faster.

Find out more.

¹¹KPMG Trust, attitudes and use of artificial intelligence, A global study 2025, accessed June 2026.
¹²FSC Consumer AI Research 2026.

07

CONCLUSION



Across global, national and financial services perspectives, a consistent picture emerges: trust in AI is neither firmly established nor entirely absent but exists in a cautious middle ground.

Consumers generally accept the growing presence of AI yet remain sceptical about its use, particularly in situations where privacy, fairness, transparency and decision outcomes are at stake.

While broad public perceptions of AI are often shaped by general awareness and media narratives, trust becomes far more nuanced when consumers evaluate specific real-world applications.

Within financial services, people assess AI not as a single technology but according to the role it plays and the potential impact it may have on them. In this context, the critical distinction is not between awareness and trust but between AI as a tool that supports human decision-making and AI as an autonomous decision-maker.

The findings highlight several priorities for building confidence in AI. Trust must be earned deliberately through transparency, explainability and strong safeguards rather than assumed to increase alongside adoption.

Organisations should prioritise applications where trust is already relatively high – such as fraud detection, customer service and administrative support – to create a foundation for broader acceptance in lower-risk settings.

Consumers also expect visible guardrails and credible risk controls, which reinforce confidence that AI is being used responsibly. Equally important is maintaining meaningful human oversight, as consumers consistently favour AI that augments human judgement rather than replaces it.

Ultimately, the evidence points to trust as the defining challenge for AI adoption today.

For financial services, success will depend not only on advancing AI capability but on designing and deploying use cases like the case studies contained in this report that demonstrate fairness, accountability, transparency and human-centred oversight.

By doing so, organisations can build the confidence needed for AI to achieve its full potential while meeting consumer expectations.

08

ANNEXES

METHODOLOGY

Desk research was conducted in June 2026 and the relevant data sources are referenced.

The FSC research was conducted via an online survey developed and hosted by CoreData. 2026 data was collected between 13 March and 1 April. A total of 2,000 valid complete responses were collected in March 2026.

All samples are representative of the New Zealand consumer population in terms of age, gender and income based on the latest Stats NZ data. The data collected forms the basis of this report.

According to Stats NZ,¹³ in December 2025, there was an estimated resident population of 5,342,000, including 1,181,150 aged 17 or younger. As this survey only included respondents aged 18 or over, the estimated resident population of the sample is 4,160,850.

AI tools were used in the development of this report.

ABOUT THE FINANCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

As the voice of the sector, the FSC is a non-profit member organisation with a vision to grow the financial confidence and wellbeing of New Zealanders. FSC members commit to delivering strong consumer outcomes from a professional and sustainable financial services sector. Our 100+ members manage funds of more than \$100 billion and pay out claims of \$3.2 billion per year (life and health insurance). Members include the major insurers in life, health, disability and income insurance, fund managers, KiwiSaver and workplace savings schemes (including restricted schemes), professional service providers and technology providers to the financial services sector.

FSC SECTOR RESEARCH

INDUSTRY-WIDE

- FSC State of the Sector: Insights into Financial Services in New Zealand (2026)
- Money & You: Financial Lives of Young New Zealanders (2025)
- Financial Resilience Index (2025)
- Money & You: Consumer Resilience and the Road to Prosperity (2024)
- Financial Resilience Index (2024)
- Money & You: The Perception Gap (2023)
- Money & You: Young People and the Cost of Living (2023)
- Financial Resilience Index (2023)
- Insights & Trends: Financial Resilience Trends in New Zealand
- Money & You: The Lost Generation? (2022)
- Financial Resilience Index (2022)
- Financial Resilience Index (2021)
- Money & You: Women and Financial Wellbeing in New Zealand (2021)
- Money & You: Generation Rent (2021)
- Money & You: It’s Not About Money, It’s About You (2020)
- Financial Resilience Index (March + August 2020)

LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE

- Money & You: Valuing Belongings Over Ourselves (2025)
- Money & You: Managing Risk Through Challenging Times (2024)
- Money & You: Taking Cover (2020)

- Life Insurance Industry Data Spotlight (quarterly)
- Health Insurance Industry Data Spotlight (quarterly)
- Gambling on Life: The Problem of Underinsurance (2020)
- Moments of Truth: Key Insights into the New Zealand Life Insurance Industry (2019)
- Risking Everything: An Insight into how New Zealanders Manage Risk (2019)
- Exploring Underinsurance within New Zealand (2011)

INVESTMENT AND FUNDS

- Money & You: Investing in Volatile Times (2022)
- Money & You: The Rise of the Digital Investor (2021)

KIWISAVER AND RETIREMENT

- KiwiSaver Industry Data Spotlight (quarterly)
- Money & You: KiwiSaver at a Crossroads (2021)
- KiwiSaver 2050: Pathways to the Future (2019)
- Shaping Futures: Closing the KiwiSaver Gap (2018)
- Generation KiwiSaver (2018)
- Great Expectations: Retirement Realities for Older New Zealanders (2017)
- Growing the KiwiSaver Pie (2017)
- KiwiSaver and the Wealth of New Zealanders (2015)

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

- Unlocking the Potential of Professional Financial Advice (2021)
- Money & You: Breaking Through the Advice Barrier (2020)
- Money & You: Literacy | Insight | Advice (2020)



¹³Infoshare.stats.govt.nz, accessed 1 May 2026.

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AUGUST 2026