

# Assistance to Autonomy

How Much Control Are Leaders Willing to Give Up as AI Becomes More Autonomous?



## State of Play

AI adoption in Australia is still early, but the push to scale is accelerating faster than organisations are ready for. **Just 21% of organisations are scaling AI, while most remain in experimentation (42%) or pilot phases (30%), and only 8% have fully embedded it.**

Returns are already diverging. Nearly 60% of large enterprises report moderate or strong ROI, compared with 39% in the mid-market, even as 23% of leaders say it is too soon to tell.

Yet the foundations are not in place. Integration is the leading barrier (34%), and 73% of organisations lack the data readiness required to deploy AI at scale.

As AI shifts from assistance to autonomous decision-making, these gaps become more consequential. Autonomous AI relies on strong integration, reliable data, and clear governance to operate at scale. Without these, organisations risk accelerating autonomy faster than they can manage it.

## Constraints on Autonomous AI



## The Autonomy Paradox

Nearly half of leaders (47%) are still in early exploration, with 15% not prepared at all. Just 10% feel highly prepared, and only 3% are actively deploying.

Organisations are moving ahead before they feel ready. **Leaders are increasing both autonomy and control, pushing AI into decision-making as pressure grows to move beyond experimentation and prove value.**

60% of leaders are willing to delegate more to AI than governance currently allows.

## The Delegation Dilemma

Leaders are not making a binary trade-off between control and autonomy. Instead, they are applying autonomy selectively.

Delegation is no longer being driven solely by confidence in the technology itself, but increasingly by the pressure to deliver outcomes.



### More willing to delegate

Routine workflows  
Operations  
Fraud detection



### Less willing to delegate

Finance  
Legal/regulatory  
People decisions

Accountability is still in flux. If an AI decision caused an unintended or negative outcome, 35% say responsibility would be debated, while 31% say it is clear and 27% say it would sit with leadership. Without clear accountability structures, leaders will continue to limit autonomy in high-stakes areas, reinforcing the boundary of control.

## To move from experimentation to trusted autonomy, leaders should focus on three priorities:



Prioritise use cases before scaling AI – focus autonomy where risk is lowest and impact is measurable



Align governance to real-world usage – close the gap between policy and how AI is already being used



Fix data readiness before expanding autonomy – without it, scale will remain constrained

For more information, download the full report [here](#).

## About Insight

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