



SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES IN TODAY'S AI WORLD.

Practical examples which you can implement.

Presented By: Alan Herrity





The gap between AI ambition and AI execution is
not a technology gap.

*It is a leadership, operating model and organisational
change opportunity.*

TODAY'S SESSION



01 Why the gap is a leadership challenge, not a technology one

02 Three tensions we see across Australian organisations right now

03 Four Australian organisations we can learn from

04 Six practical shifts that you can make

05 Questions for your leadership team to take away



THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE



It's not tools, budget or ambition that's missing.

The pattern

Many organisations have invested. Senior leaders have been appointed. Early progress is visible. Then delivery expectations collide with legacy systems, internal complexity and unclear accountability.

What this looks like

In some cases, senior leaders are waiting for AI to be done for them rather than engaging personally. In others, a senior AI leader carries the title but not the authority.

The result

An avoidable cycle. Investment approved. Progress stalls. Scepticism directed at AI itself, when the real constraint is the operating model around it. We have been here before. Remember Agile.



PART ONE

Three tensions you'll recognise.

The patterns showing up consistently across Australian organisations.

#1 - BOARD URGENCY VS ORGANISATIONAL READINESS

*Boards feel the organisation is not moving fast enough.
That concern is not always supported by data.*

Meanwhile, the people closest to the work need the right support, guidance, frameworks and guardrails to succeed together.

Unlike previous transformations, AI does not follow a predictable or linear return profile. The value horizon is uncertain, and the capability is evolving in real time. This increases pressure at Board level. You need the key internal data required to make informed decisions

The key is alignment on where you start, not just how fast you run. You will never be 100% ready. My advice is to run your own race.



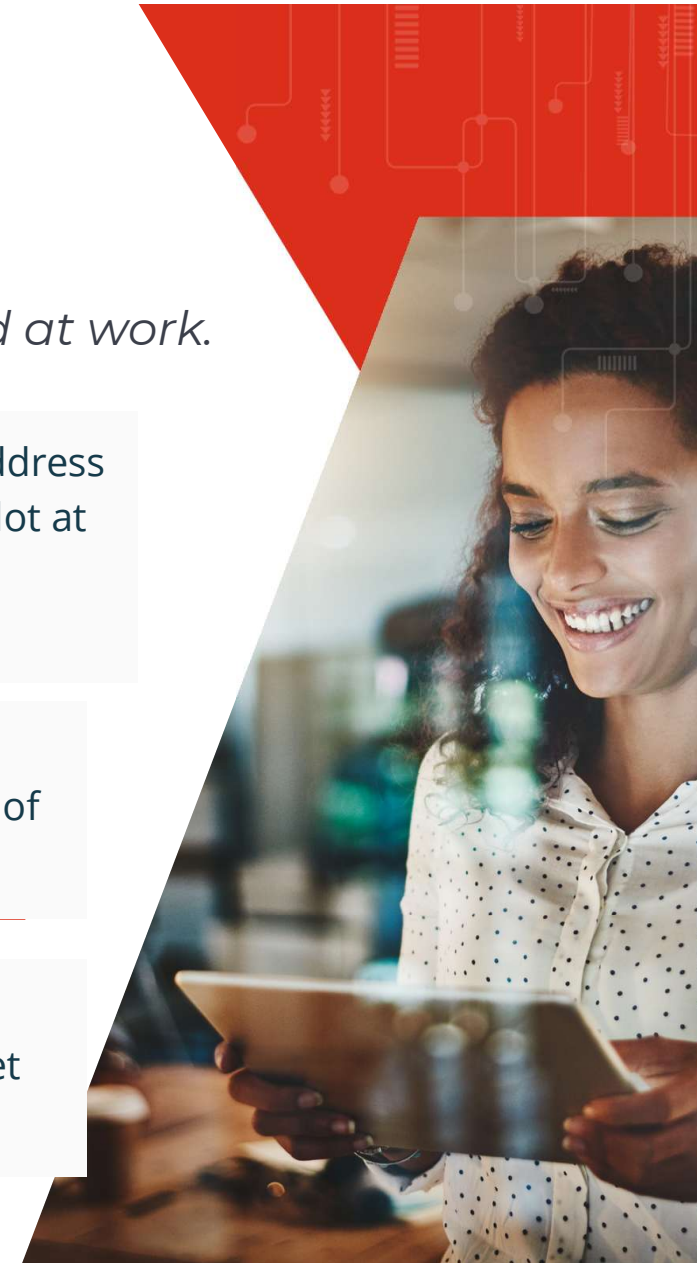
#2 - PERSONAL EXPERIMENTATION VS ORGANISATIONAL CONSTRAINT

Some Executives are using AI tools at home and constrained at work.

A Chief Transformation Officer I spoke with has built several AI agents to address the challenges his teams face. He uses Gemini at home and Microsoft Copilot at work, not because Copilot is better, but because of internal governance requirements.

Bottom-up innovation is happening. That is worth encouraging. The opportunity is to bring teams together to share learnings and ensure ways of working are consistent.

His view was clear: Executives need to stop waiting for others to figure this out. Lean in. Own it personally. Not delegate it, do it yourself first. Do not let perfection be the enemy of progress.



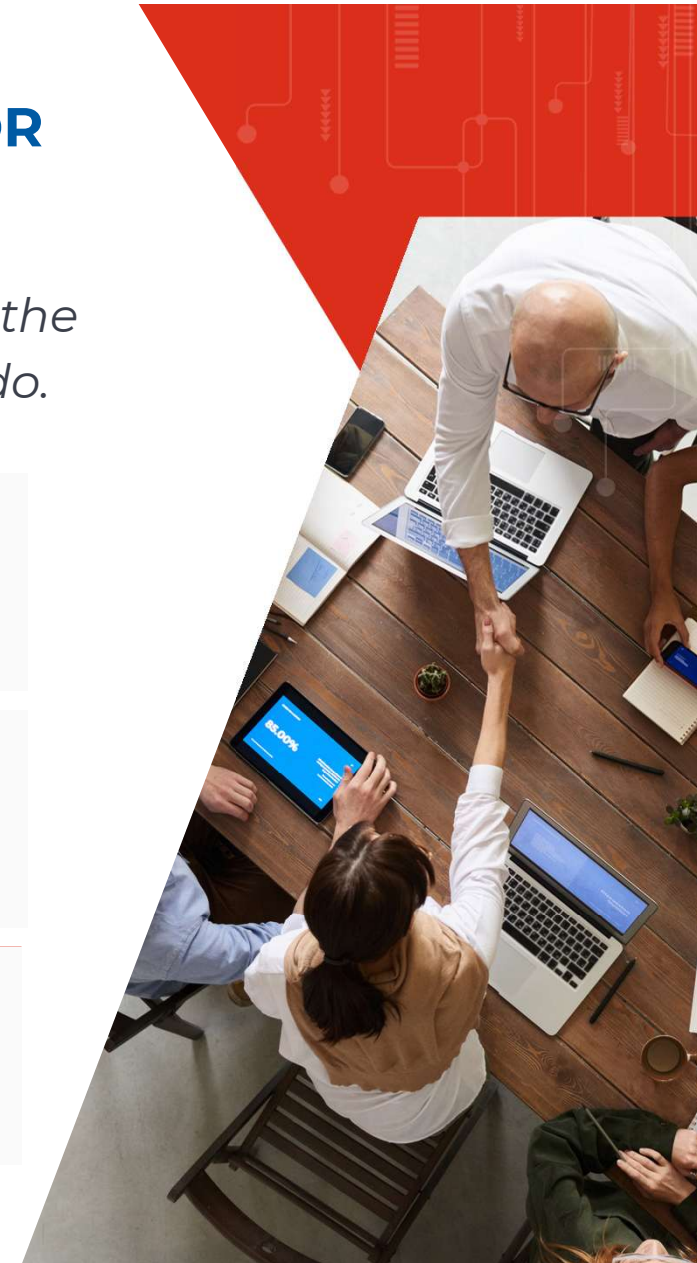
#3 - HIRING FOR THE END-STATE VS BUILDING FOR WHERE YOU ARE

In some cases, senior AI leaders are being appointed before the organisation has resolved what the role is actually there to do.

Within 12–18 months, the role stalls. This is not about the person, it is the gap between the role that was created and the conditions needed for it to succeed.

Before appointing a senior AI leader, resolve: What is this role responsible for? Where in the organisation does this function sit? What authority does it carry? How does this work with the Technology function?

The challenge is not the Technology. It is the gap between the role created, clarity on responsibilities, authority, and what the organisation is doing to support its success.



PART TWO

Four Australian organisations we can learn from.

Not theory. Real decisions. Real results. One clear lesson each.

BENDIGO KANGAN INSTITUTE

Governance as a Product



WHAT THEY DID

As AI scales inside an organisation, questions multiply fast, what is approved, what data can be used, where are the boundaries?

BKI built a single source of truth: the SAFE AI Agent. One place for AI usage guidance, policy, risk frameworks and governance, accessible across the whole organisation.

Governance here is acting as an enabler of scale, a pattern increasingly seen in organisations successfully moving beyond the pilot stage.

If your teams are still waiting for permission to use AI, look first at whether the leadership and governance decisions have been made clearly enough.

ONE CLEAR LESSON

Building governance into how your organisation operates from the start enables adoption. Adding it after the fact, as a compliance requirement, tends to slow things down.

KIP MCGRATH EDUCATION CENTRES

MID-MARKET SPEED WITH GOVERNANCE



WHAT THEY DID

AI governance was embedded at Executive level from the outset, the results are clear. Leaders identified specific business challenges first, then chose the technology.

The results:

- ▶ 76% of students adopted the Monty AI platform
- ▶ 97% unit cost reduction in AI-driven communications
- ▶ School Curriculum development cycles cut from months to days

Mid-market evidence that you do not need an enterprise budget to move with speed and rigour simultaneously.

ONE CLEAR LESSON

Governance and speed can be achieved concurrently if you adopt the right approach.

WESFARMERS SCALE AND LITERACY



WHAT THEY DID

In November 2025, Wesfarmers partnered with OpenAI to deploy ChatGPT Enterprise across the Group, they have also partnered with Microsoft and Google Cloud. Customised training was delivered alongside the technology.

AI was positioned as a productivity and growth lever. Rob Scott named AI literacy as a non-negotiable leadership expectation across the organisation.

"We believe Australian businesses should adopt AI-driven solutions to remain globally competitive." - Rob Scott, MD, Wesfarmers

ONE CLEAR LESSON

When the CEO names AI literacy as non-negotiable, it changes what every leader below them feels accountable for.

The Executive group owned it. AI capability has reached frontline retail employees across the Group. A Responsible AI team was embedded into projects to make governance an accelerant.

AUSTRALIAN SUPERANNUATION ORGANISATION GOVERNANCE & OWNERSHIP IN PRACTICE



WHAT THEY DID

This organisation made AI adoption a leadership group challenge to resolve together.

- ▶ Named AI Owners accountable for agreed processes and workflows
- ▶ Each Executive owns two AI use cases, tied directly to OKRs and performance reviews
- ▶ A large pipeline of use cases identified across 8 business units
- ▶ Risk framework with Executive sign-off at low, medium and high thresholds

Not everyone is AI-savvy. That is expected. The support structure here ensures no one is left to navigate it alone.

ONE CLEAR LESSON

Named Executive accountability for AI use cases, embedded in performance frameworks, turns AI from aspiration into operation.

PART THREE

Six shifts that you can make.

1 Declare AI fluency as mandatory leadership skill

2 Require every Executive to redesign at least one workflow using AI

3 Make AI use-cases a standing ELT agenda item

4 Set clear decision rights between humans and AI agents

5 Link AI capability to career pathways and succession

6 Hold Board members to the same standards as Executives

1

DECLARE AI FLUENCY AS MANDATORY LEADERSHIP LITERACY

A non-negotiable for anyone leading a team or function. It is imperative that leaders are given the necessary support and training to take this step.

6%

of Australian organisations mandate enterprise-wide AI training. One in four have no preparation plan at all. - EY Research

The pathways exist. Melbourne Business School, University of Sydney, Monash Business School's AI for Leaders program. Globally: Harvard Business School, MIT Sloan, Oxford Saïd, INSEAD.

Takeaway: *Declare it non-negotiable. Then build the pathways and support for your leaders.*

2

REQUIRE EVERY EXECUTIVE TO REDESIGN ONE WORKFLOW USING AI

Not a classroom exercise. Not a presentation about AI. A real workflow, producing a real outcome, shared with the Leadership team and your team/s.

When Executives do this themselves, the questions they ask get sharper. The investment decisions they make get better. They can tell when a vendor's claims are plausible, and when they are not.

A practical example: Within Bunnings, a tool was built for frontline staff covering product identification, multilingual customer support and real-time on-floor assistance, built to solve a real operational problem.

Takeaway: All leaders should lean into AI and share their learnings with their teams.

3

MAKE AI USE-CASES A STANDING ELT AGENDA ITEM

Not a quarterly update. Not a separate AI workstream. A standing item on the ELT agenda, treated with the same weight as financial performance.

When AI sits permanently on the agenda, blockers surface where they can actually be resolved. Progress is visible to the people with the authority to act on it.

Treating AI as a project with a start and end date creates the wrong kind of accountability. The organisations making the most progress manage it as part of how they run, not as a separate initiative.

Wesfarmers embedded AI champions across the organisation to spread ownership and support peer learning at every level, the central team enabled, not owned, the work.

Takeaway: *Keep this as a standing ELT agenda item until it is no longer necessary.*

4

SET CLEAR DECISION RIGHTS BETWEEN HUMANS AND AI AGENTS

AI agents can do your coding; however, humans need to decide what needs to be coded, the quality of the code, and what outcomes you are looking for. You need to put the necessary guardrails around this.

Australia's National AI Centre named human oversight and clear decision rights as two of six essential governance practices in its October 2025 guidance.

Define the guardrails before you start using agents at scale.

Takeaway: *Ensure that you have the right checks and balances in place when using AI agents.*

LINK AI CAPABILITY TO CAREER PATHWAYS AND SUCCESSION

When AI fluency is tied to progression, it stops being optional. The incentive structure changes. The conversations leaders have with their managers and teams change.

This will concern leaders who are not yet confident with AI. That concern is legitimate. The appropriate response is to support your leaders. If you have the aptitude and the curiosity, you can be retrained.

The superannuation example makes this concrete. AI use-case delivery embedded into Executive OKRs and performance reviews.

Takeaway: *When AI capability appears in career development and progression conversations, it signals to leaders that this is a genuine organisational priority.*

6

HOLD BOARD MEMBERS TO THE SAME STANDARDS AS EXECUTIVES

Board-level engagement with AI is increasingly being seen as a governance requirement, not a leadership nice-to-have.

If AI fluency is a clear expectation for Executives, the same logic applies to Board members. Board members and Executives are naturally concerned about accountability. Who is responsible if something goes wrong? A cybersecurity breach involving an AI system. A consequential decision made by an AI agent without adequate human oversight. These are legitimate concerns. The answer is not to avoid engagement. It is to build the literacy and agree on a governance framework before something goes wrong.

Takeaway: Board-level AI literacy is a fundamental requirement for corporate governance.

THE NUMBERS



61%

of Australian respondents say AI is already improving efficiency & productivity

Deloitte, State of AI

28%

have moved 40%+ of pilots into production, majority still at the threshold of scaling

Deloitte

6%

of Australian organisations mandate enterprise-wide AI training

EY Research

22%

of Australian companies report having a highly advanced model for agent governance

Deloitte

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

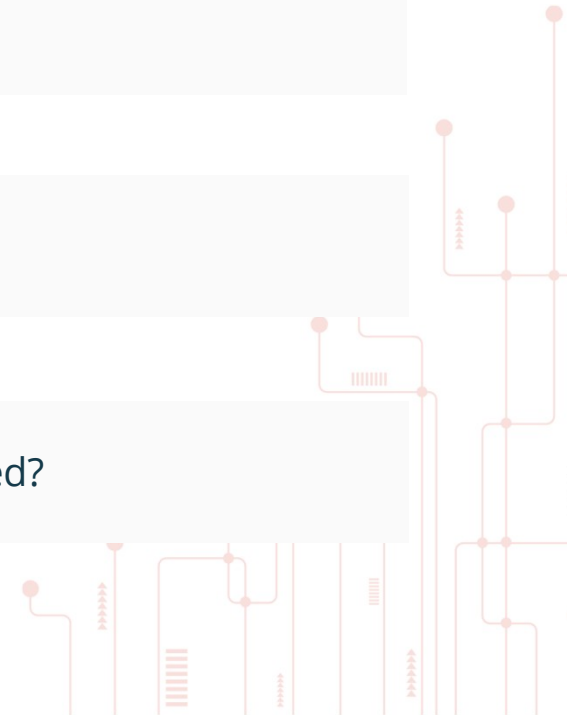


01 What does the Executive team need to decide in order to make genuine progress?

02 Where can we ensure quick wins, gain confidence and traction?

03 If the organisation feels stuck, what would actually need to change?

04 Are the right conditions in place for a newly appointed AI leader to succeed?



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*It is never too late to start. Give yourself grace.
The risk is not in starting imperfectly, it is in not
starting at all.*

- Dr Jen Frahm, Organisational Change Leader



QUESTIONS + DISCUSSION

Q&A

What questions do you have?

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Full AI Leadership Report available on request.

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THANK YOU

Replay will be shared after the session

*"Everyone runs their own race.
But you need to know your starting position
before you decide how fast to run."*

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