

# Accelerating AI skills

## Preparing the Workforce in New Zealand for Jobs of the Future

March 2024

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping the workforce in New Zealand - from how organisations operate to how work gets done. Despite varying levels of AI adoption across sectors and organizations in New Zealand, AI will be a game-changer over the next five years.

To better understand emerging AI usage trends and where workplaces might be headed, Access Partnership collaborated with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to survey over 1,600 workers and 500 organisations in New Zealand. Findings show that having AI skills could boost productivity, salaries, and career growth for workers, but there's a lack of AI-skilled talent to harness the full potential of AI.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** taps into the power of computers and machines to mimic the problem-solving and decision-making capabilities of the human mind, such as visual perception, speech recognition, and translating languages.

### Top Takeaways:

#### 1 Most organisations will use AI by 2028 and expect big benefits

More than **90%** of surveyed employers in New Zealand expect their organisations will use AI-powered solutions and tools by 2028. While most employers (**86%**) believe their IT departments will be the biggest beneficiary of AI, they also expect sales and marketing (**85%**), finance (**83%**), research and development (**83%**), business operations (**83%**), legal (**75%**), and HR (**72%**) to benefit too. In addition, **63%** of employers expect task automation to be the top benefit of AI.

#### 2 Generative AI will transform how we work

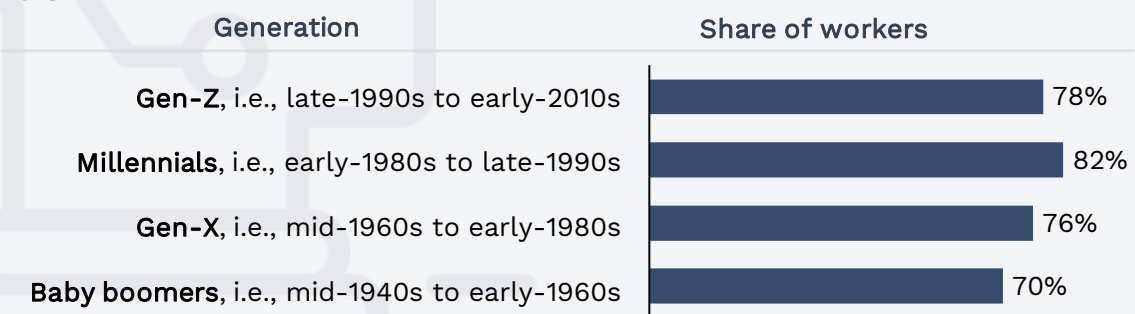
The results show a largely positive outlook on the impact of generative AI, with **92%** of employers and **86%** of workers in New Zealand expecting to use generative AI in their organisations in the next five years. This fast-developing technology will be used by workers of all levels of technical knowledge – **55%** of ‘tech-specialists’ expect to use it significantly, followed by **41%** of ‘tech-adjacent’ workers, and **25%** of ‘non-tech’ workers.

**Generative AI** refers to a type of AI that can help create new ideas and content in the form of conversations, stories, images, videos, music, and more – unlike traditional AI systems which are designed to recognise patterns and make predictions.

#### 3 Acquiring AI skills could boost pay and create other career benefits for workers

Employers in New Zealand value workers with AI skills and are willing to pay at least **30%** more to hire them. Workers, on the other hand, have signalled a strong desire to pick up AI skills to advance their careers, with **79%** showing a keen interest. The top motivations for acquiring AI skills include increased job efficiency, greater job satisfaction, and higher salaries. Some notable stats include **77%** of female respondents and **70%** of baby boomers showing a keen interest in picking up AI skills to advance their careers.

Share of surveyed workers interested in developing AI skills to advance careers, by generation

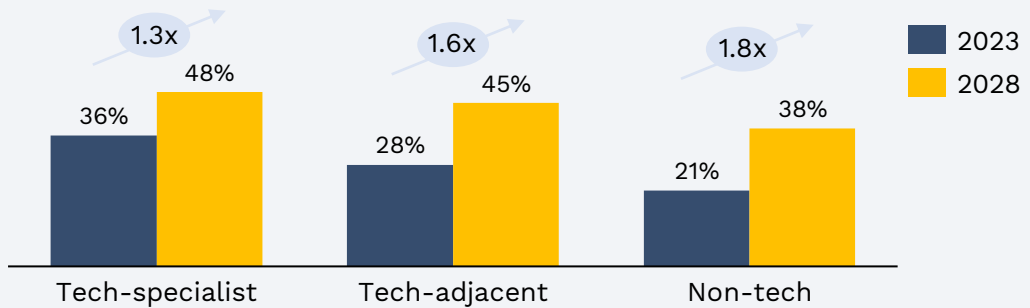


#### 4 The productivity payoff from an AI-skilled workforce could be immense

Surveyed employers in New Zealand believe that AI can boost productivity by **49%**, while workers find that AI can make tasks **46%** more efficient. The full extent of AI productivity gains is expected to be felt in 2028, with workers across all levels of technical knowledge<sup>1</sup> anticipated to contribute. In particular, the use of AI solutions and tools by 'non-tech' workers is projected to nearly **double** by 2028.

##### Use of AI solutions and tools by non-tech workers expected to nearly double by 2028

Expected share of job tasks completed using AI-powered solutions and tools by type of tech worker in 2023 and 2028

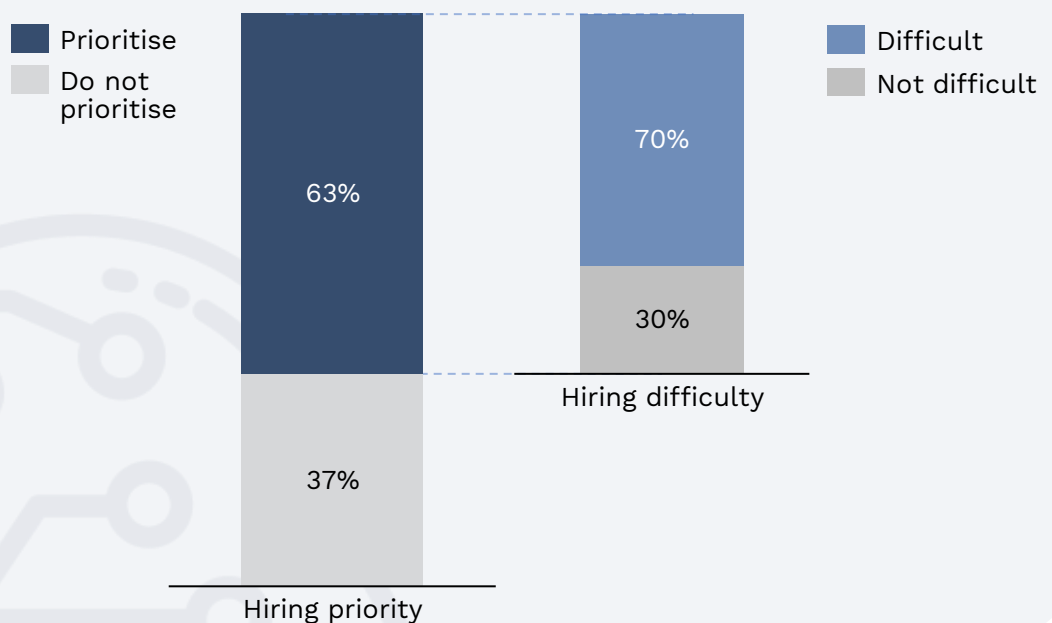


#### 5 The AI skills gap can be reduced through more awareness of training programs

Hiring AI talent is a priority for over **six in ten (63%)** employers in New Zealand, of which **70%** can't find the AI talent they need. The research also uncovers a training awareness gap, whereby **79%** of employers don't know how to implement an AI workforce training program. And **75%** of workers aren't sure about the relevant career paths where AI skills would be useful.

##### 70% of surveyed employers who prioritise hiring AI talent find it difficult to hire skilled workers

Share of surveyed employers responding to each option



SOURCE: Survey of 513 employers and 1,671 workers in New Zealand (Access Partnership analysis)

1. Three types of workers were surveyed: (1) Tech-specialists: those who develop new technologies and use specialised tech knowledge, (2) Tech-adjacent workers: those dealing with technological products and services, (3) Non-tech workers: those who do not require advanced tech knowledge and skills.