

GenAI Survey of Social Service Providers: Summary

August 2026

Social
Service
Providers

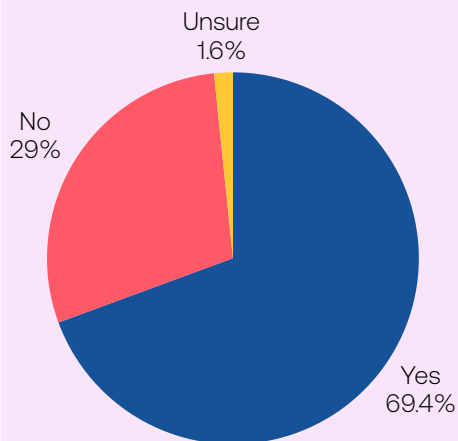
Te Pai
Ora o
Aotearoa



307
respondents

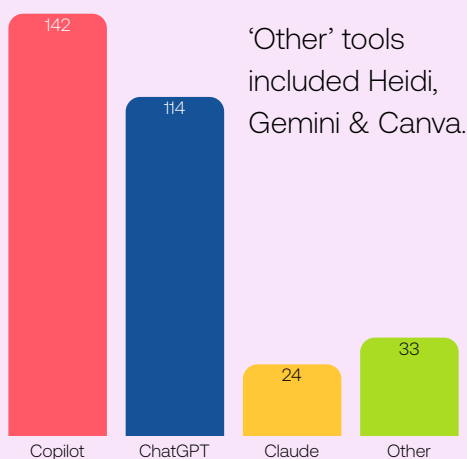
69% of respondents use genAI in their mahi.

Do you use genAI in your mahi?

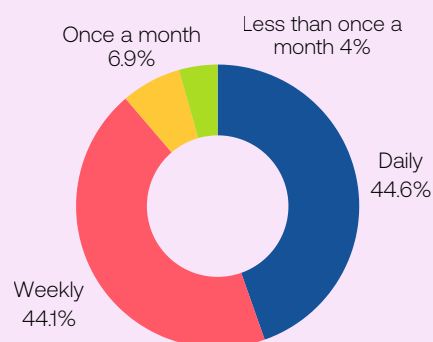


Of respondents not using genAI tools, ethical concerns were cited as the most common reason (77%), followed by lack of training (56%).

What genAI tools do you use?

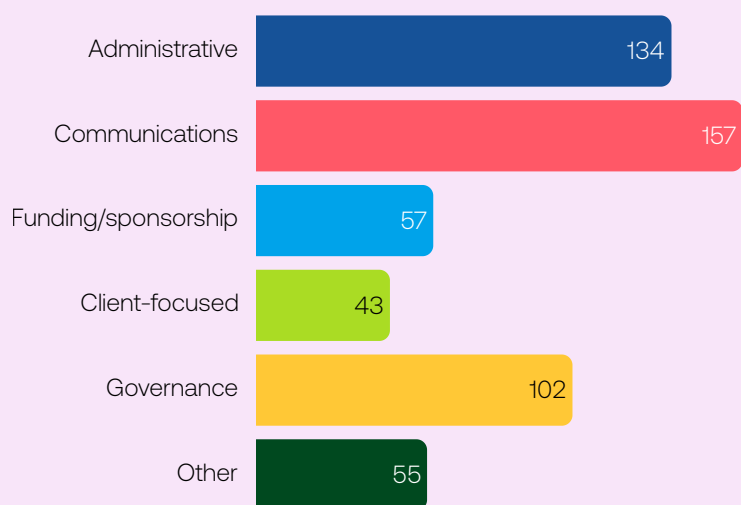


How often do you use genAI in your mahi?



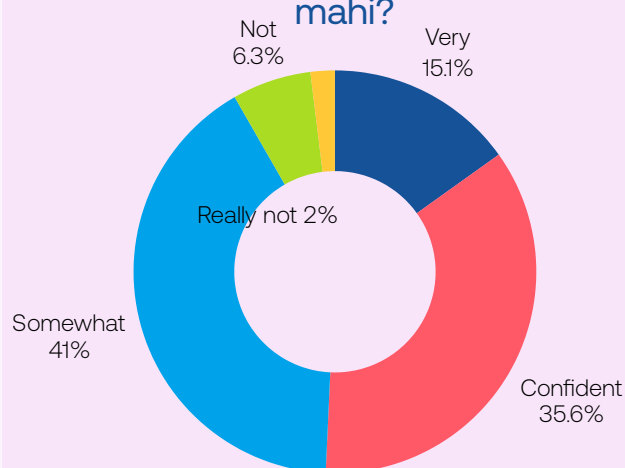
In our survey, we defined Generative AI (genAI) as a type of AI that can create new content (text, images, video, audio, code) in response to human prompts. It is trained on very large collections of existing content which has been taken from the internet and other sources.

What type of tasks do you use genAI for?



Senior leaders and those in governance roles report using genAI tools more: 83.9% compared to people managers (78.2%), back office kaimahi (74.0%) and frontline kaimahi. (49.5%).

How confident are you in using genAI tools safely and appropriately in your mahi?



58% of those using genAI reported having an organisational AI policy.

Key themes

Some are enthusiastic adopters...

Free-text responses indicate a number of people who use genAI are 'enthusiastic adopters' of these tools in the workplace, especially amongst those in leadership roles in the sector. This came through clearest in responses to the question "What do you see as the benefits or opportunities, if any, of using Generative AI in your mahi?" Most responses to this question included some mention of efficiency or productivity gains with other themes including using AI to write, think or compile resources on behalf of kaimahi.

... but privacy and security was a key concern for many.

Despite the enthusiasm of some respondents, others using genAI had concerns. By far, the most common was the idea that genAI may compromise privacy or security. Of those not using genAI, many cited privacy as a reason. Of those using genAI, more than half mentioned privacy or security, or some variation of this, in response to the question "What are your concerns, if any, about using Generative AI in your mahi?"

Interestingly, responses showed a wide range of approaches and levels of understanding to privacy and security risks, especially around sharing client information. At the more risk-averse end were respondents who said they would never use AI for client-facing work. Others argued that any privacy risk was over-stated. Responses included a range of views on what kinds of identifying details (e.g. client names) are appropriate to input into large language models.

Other recurring concerns included incorrect information, cognitive offloading, lack of understanding, depersonalisation, undermining of Māori data sovereignty and 'macro' concerns like the environmental impact of data centres. A number of respondents were opposed to genAI on a fundamental level.

There is a strong desire for more guidance from leaders and government.

While AI Policies and training are becoming more common, one of the clearest themes that came throughout the written responses to the survey was that providers want clearer guidance on their use of genAI.

This desire for leadership came through strongly in the responses to the last question: "Do you have any other thoughts to share about the use of Generative AI in the social sector?" Over one-in-five responses referred in some way to the need for more training, internal policies or leadership from government. Te Pai Ora SSPA supports this call for leadership.

Next steps

We are calling on government to regulate genAI across all sectors in a way that prioritises the wellbeing of mokopuna and whānau and honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

We have identified several social service providers, peak bodies and organisations across other sectors who are taking a principled, informed approach to how they approach genAI. We will continue to collaborate with and amplify these voices.

For leaders in any organisations developing their own policies, guidance and training, we would encourage you to engage with any concerns and risks raised by your kaimahi and subject matter experts. Are these risks relevant to your own organisation? Have you considered ways they could be mitigated? Are you supporting kaimahi who have personal ethical objections to or reservations about using genAI?

"May prevent experiential skill building, especially in assessment, if social workers use AI to generate their assessments - could lead to lazy practices (in newer social workers) and misunderstanding of how risks and safety conclusions are drawn."
-Frontline Kaimahi

"We are constantly fighting to control a technology that is scaling faster than we can handle. With limited advice coming from the governing bodies above our organisation, it's being left to us ... to independently develop guidance and policy. We're all doing this in isolation."
-People Manager

"The use of Generative AI in the social sector should be guided by clear ethical frameworks, including Te Tiriti-informed practice, equity considerations, and cultural responsiveness."
-Chief Executive

The problem isn't the robot

Lani Evans. Co-founder & CEO. lanie@fundsorter.com



Three ways your organisation might choose to engage

- 1 **Do what you do now, but faster** — assessing, reporting, drafting, connecting.
- 2 **Extend and expand what's possible** — reshape what you offer, or who you can reach.
- 3 **Shape who builds, governs and owns it** — the bigger battle about whose sets the rules and how this technology affects us

Three questions when building and using

- 1 **Who's actually in the room?** The kaimahi doing the work and the people it's done to — not just the leadership table.
- 2 **Does it honour Te Tiriti?** Especially when it's Māori data and Māori lives moving through the system.
- 3 **Who owns and controls what comes out the other end?**

Skills to nurture

Empathy	Creativity
Curiosity	Critical thinking

About Fundsorter

A social enterprise based focused on creating a more equitable Aotearoa by using data, humans and tech to:

- 1 Make grant funding easier and more equitable.
- 2 Provide data and insights on where grant funding actually flows across te motu.
- 3 Support the most technologically literate community sector in the world.

References

- **Worry vs wonder** — Ipsos AI Monitor 2025. [ipsos.com](https://www.ipsos.com)
- **AI training rates** — KPMG, Trust, attitudes and use of AI, NZ [kpmg.com/nz](https://www.kpmg.com/nz)
- **Individualism and AI attitudes** — AI & Society, 2025. link.springer.com

The reasons AI aversion are an emerging field of study and the framing here is partly interpretive. The view that poor governance produces lower trust is my own.

Come and learn with us — it's free

AI for Charities is free, online and open to anyone working in the community sector. The course covers what AI actually is, how to support governance decisions, safely connecting AI to your work, and building skills and workflows. You can join the classes live, watch the recordings at your own pace, join technical drop in sessions, and online forums to share, chat, and ask questions.

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If you want to go deeper

Read

- **Ruha Benjamin**, Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code (Polity, 2019)
- **Karen Hao**, Empire of AI: Dreams and Nightmares in Sam Altman's OpenAI (Penguin, 2025)

Follow

- **Julia Pahina** — Fibre Fale <https://www.fibrefale.com/>
- **Dr Timnit Gebru** — Distributed AI Research Institute · dair-institute.org · [@timnitgebru.bsky.social](https://twitter.com/timnitgebru)
- **Dr Karaitiana Taiuru** — Māori data sovereignty, Te Tiriti-based AI ethics · taiuru.co.nz
- **Joshua Vial** — Fundsorter co-founder & CTO, weekly on AI tooling · joshuavial.com
- **Beth Kanter** — practical AI for non-profits · bethkanter.org
- **Emily Bender & Alex Hanna** — Mystery AI Hype Theater 3000 podcast · dair-institute.org/maiht3k

Explore

- **Te Hiku Media's Papa Reo** — community-owned te reo Māori speech recognition, under their own Kaitiakitanga Licence · papareo.nz

- **NZ's AI strategy in the OECD** — [oecd.ai](https://www.oecd.ai)
- **Generative AI in the social services sector** — Te Pai Ora SSPA
- **Others choosing differently** — South Australia's Royal Commission into AI (Aug 2026); EU AI Act transparency rules, in force 2 Aug 2026.

Social work ethics in the age of AI

Testing AI against our tikanga. Nathan Chong-Nee, Pou Whakahaere | Chief Executive, ANZASW.



The frame

AI is not neutral. It is political, structural, and locates power at its core. This is, before anything else, an ethics question, and we do not come to it empty-handed. ANZASW's interim briefing will hold to two principles and some recommendations.

- **Precautionary principle:** adopt a tool only when there is credible evidence it is safe. Better safe than sorry.
- **Harm reduction:** for those already using AI, or required to, reduce the harm we can see.

Testing AI against our tikanga

These are the seven pou/values embedded within the ANZASW Code of Ethics values, Ngā Tikanga Matatika. Similar pillars run through professional standards across the social services. These questions are here to spur whakaaro, and perhaps your own pātai.

Rangatiratanga. Does it uphold Māori authority over Māori data, or entrench digital colonisation?

Manaakitanga. Does it extend care and respect, or replace the human connection at the centre of our mahi?

Whanaungatanga. Does it strengthen relationships, or extract the connections it depends on?

Aroha. Can we hold aroha for people and for Te Taiao, given its environmental cost?

Kotahitanga. Is it built for collective good and diversity, or to serve the few?

Wairuatanga. Does it honour diverse spiritual and cultural worldviews, or speak for a few?

Mātātoa. AI cannot supply moral courage. Where must we show it ourselves?

Two pātai for leaders

1. **The workforce interface.** When kaimahi reach for AI to survive a workload we have failed to fix, are we relieving the pressure, or are we leveraging AI to justify never fixing it?
2. **Government and data sovereignty.** As we ask government to lead on AI, can we be assured that Māori data sovereignty and racial bias will be taken seriously?