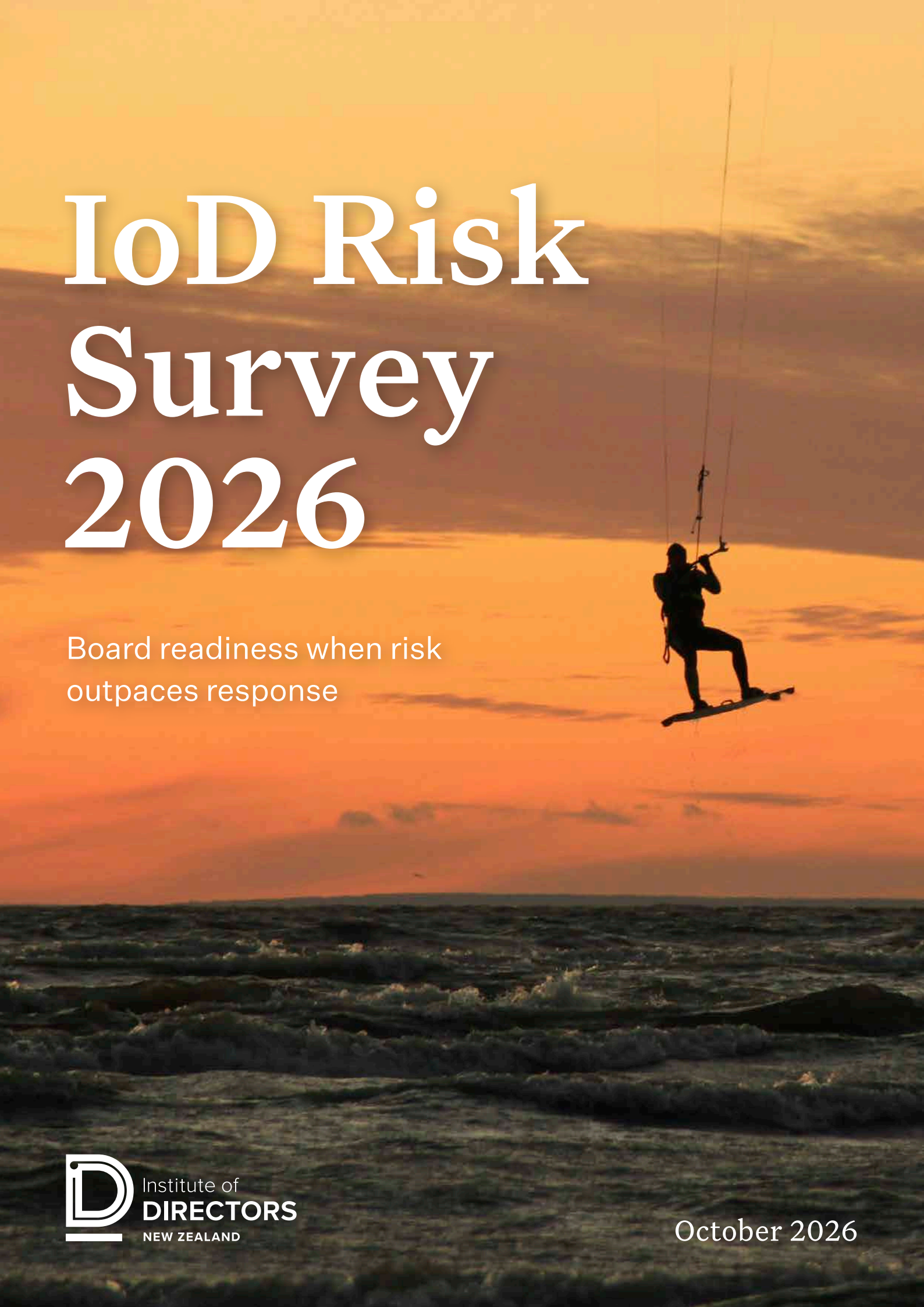
IoD Risk Survey 2026

Board readiness when risk outpaces response



Institute of DIRECTORS NEW ZEALAND

October 2026

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(October 2026)

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Executive summary

The IoD Risk Survey 2026 shows boards working across a broad, interconnected risk landscape that affects both day-to-day and strategic decisions. The survey received 348 responses and was led by the Institute of Directors with support from Marsh.

The survey examined how boards are engaging with different risk areas – whether they are being discussed at a high level, actively shaping decisions, or having their potential financial impacts quantified. Respondents were asked about a range of financial, geopolitical, technology, climate and natural hazard, supply chain and health and safety risks over the previous 12 months. In this report 'engagement' combines high-level discussion with risks that actively shaped decisions.

Liquidity and funding risk is the area where the highest proportion of respondents (40.1%) reported quantifying potential financial impacts. In contrast, cybersecurity and technology disruption, data, privacy and artificial intelligence (AI)-related risks, and geopolitical and geoeconomic risk are more likely to be discussed or influence decisions than to have their financial impacts quantified. For cybersecurity and technology disruption, 50.1% said it had actively shaped decisions, but only 21.9% had quantified its potential financial impact.

The findings show how risk categories intersect. AI is both an opportunity and a cyber, workforce and liability issue. Geopolitical shifts reach into supply chains, markets, energy and investment. Physical risks affect continuity, insurance, assets and long-term capital decisions. People risk remains fundamental to delivery and resilience. Almost half of respondents (49.7%) had discussed automation or AI in response to workforce or productivity challenges, illustrating how technology, people and productivity are converging on the board agenda.

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The results also vary by organisational size and type. Respondents from organisations with revenue or budgets of more than $50 million reported greater use of external advisers and scenario analysis and were more likely to report taking the listed actions in response to geopolitical and climate or natural hazard risks than those from organisations with revenue or budgets of less than $1 million. The difference is particularly visible in responses to geopolitical risk: 51.5% of respondents from organisations with revenue or budgets of less than $1 million selected none of the listed geopolitical or geoeconomic actions, compared with 9.0% of those with revenue or budgets of more than $50 million. Boards need information, capability and tools that are proportionate to the risks most relevant to their organisation.

Marsh's *Navigating Global Risks in the Pacific 2026* report similarly highlights the growing interconnection between geopolitical, digital, climate and workforce risks. The IoD survey adds a New Zealand governance lens, showing where those pressures are already prompting board action and where readiness is still developing.

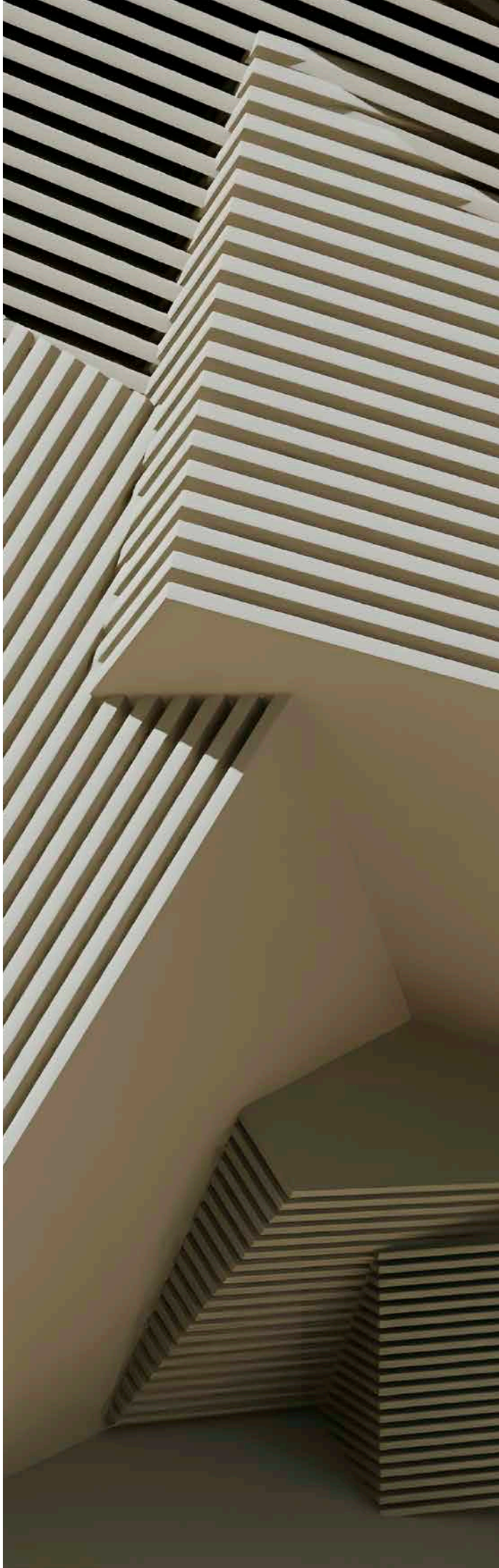


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Five themes shape the report

1. **Board attention is broad, but depth of response is uneven:** Boards are engaging with a wide set of risks, but the use of financial quantification and other decision tools varies across risk areas.

2. **Geopolitical risk has moved into business decisions:** External disruption is affecting investment, market concentration, supply chains and resilience planning, with material differences by organisational scale.

3. **AI is mainstream, but governance is still forming:** Boards are engaging with AI use and AI-amplified cyber risk, while financial, liability and capability questions are less widely discussed.

4. **Physical resilience focuses on continuity and exposure:** Continuity, asset exposure and insurance receive more attention than scenario analysis and longer-term adaptation.

5. **People and capability shape risk readiness:** Succession, key person dependence and skills remain core risks, while access to advisers, risk routines and financial tools varies across organisations.

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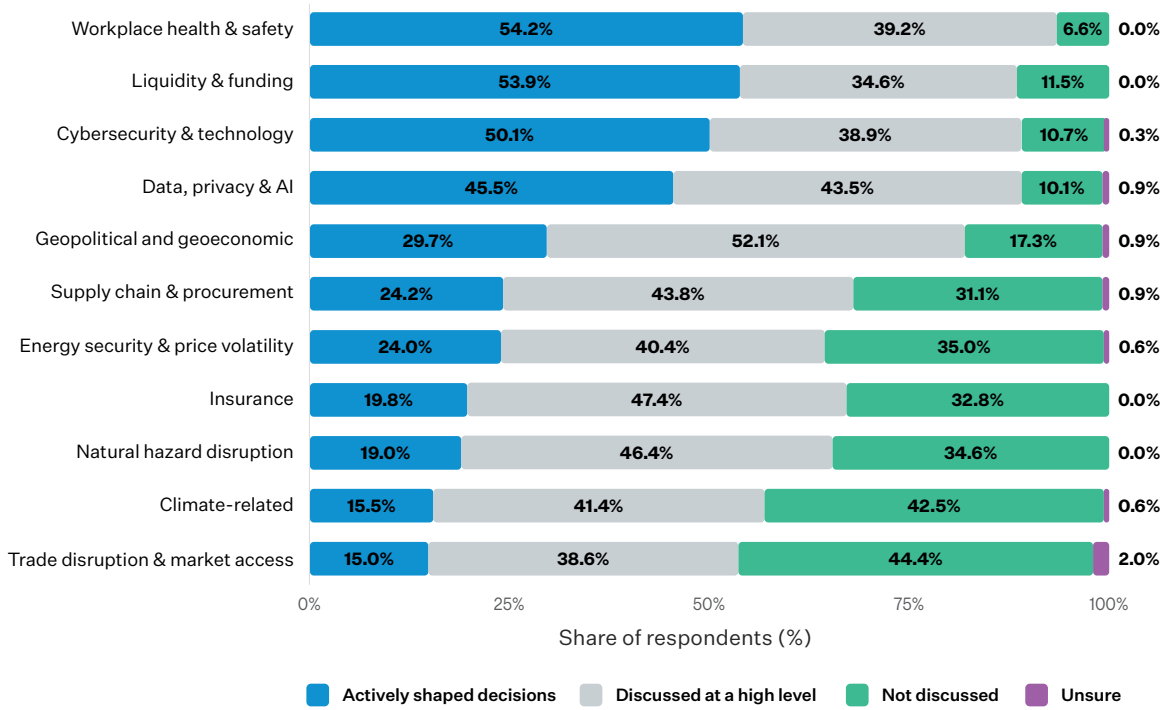
Board attention is broad, but depth of response is uneven

The survey does not reveal a single dominant risk shaping board decisions. Instead, four areas sit at the centre of board attention. Workplace health and safety actively shaped decisions for 54.2% of respondents; liquidity and funding for 53.9%; cybersecurity and technology disruption for 50.1%; and data, privacy and AI-related risk for 45.5% (see Figure 1).

When high-level discussion is included, the breadth is clearer. Workplace health and safety reached 93.4% engagement; cyber and technology 89.0%; data, privacy and AI-related risk 89.0%; and geopolitical and geoeconomic risk 81.8%.

Trade disruption, climate-related risk, natural hazard disruption and energy security and price volatility had lower reported levels of direct decision impact, but every risk in the survey had either been discussed or influenced decisions for more than half of respondents.

Figure 1: Board engagement by risk area





The survey also asked respondents to identify, in their own words, the risks receiving the most board attention and those subject to active control or mitigation. Cybersecurity, liquidity and cashflow, health and safety, AI, and geopolitical or economic risk were among the most frequently cited in both categories. This suggests the preset risk options broadly matched the risks respondents themselves identified as receiving the most attention and action.

Marsh's *Navigating Global Risks in the Pacific 2026* report similarly frames the regional risk agenda around geopolitics and global trade, digital transformation, climate and sustainability, and workforce. It provides a broader regional context for the risks receiving board attention and action in New Zealand.

However, there is continuity as well as change. The 2018 Marsh and IoD *Directors' risk survey report 2018* found that people and IT-related risks dominated board concerns, with cyber the number one external and emerging risk. Cyber has since become a routine board issue, while people risk remains persistent. AI was also beginning to emerge as a disruptive technology alongside blockchain and robotics. The 2026 survey shows AI and technology risks have moved much further into the mainstream of board attention.

The longer view suggests that established risks persist as newer ones emerge. In the *Global Risks Report 2016*, which assessed risks over a 10-year horizon, failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation was ranked the most impactful global risk; a decade later, environmental risks dominate the 10-year outlook. In 2016, AI was included as an example within the broader risk category of adverse consequences of technological advances, but by 2026 adverse outcomes of AI technologies rank fifth on the 10-year severity outlook. Adverse outcomes of AI have become a distinct long-term risk category, alongside established environmental risks, and are also receiving more immediate attention from boards in the 2026 IoD survey.

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Financial quantification is less widespread

The survey separates board engagement with a risk from whether its potential financial impact has been reviewed or quantified. That distinction reveals one of the clearest gaps in the results.

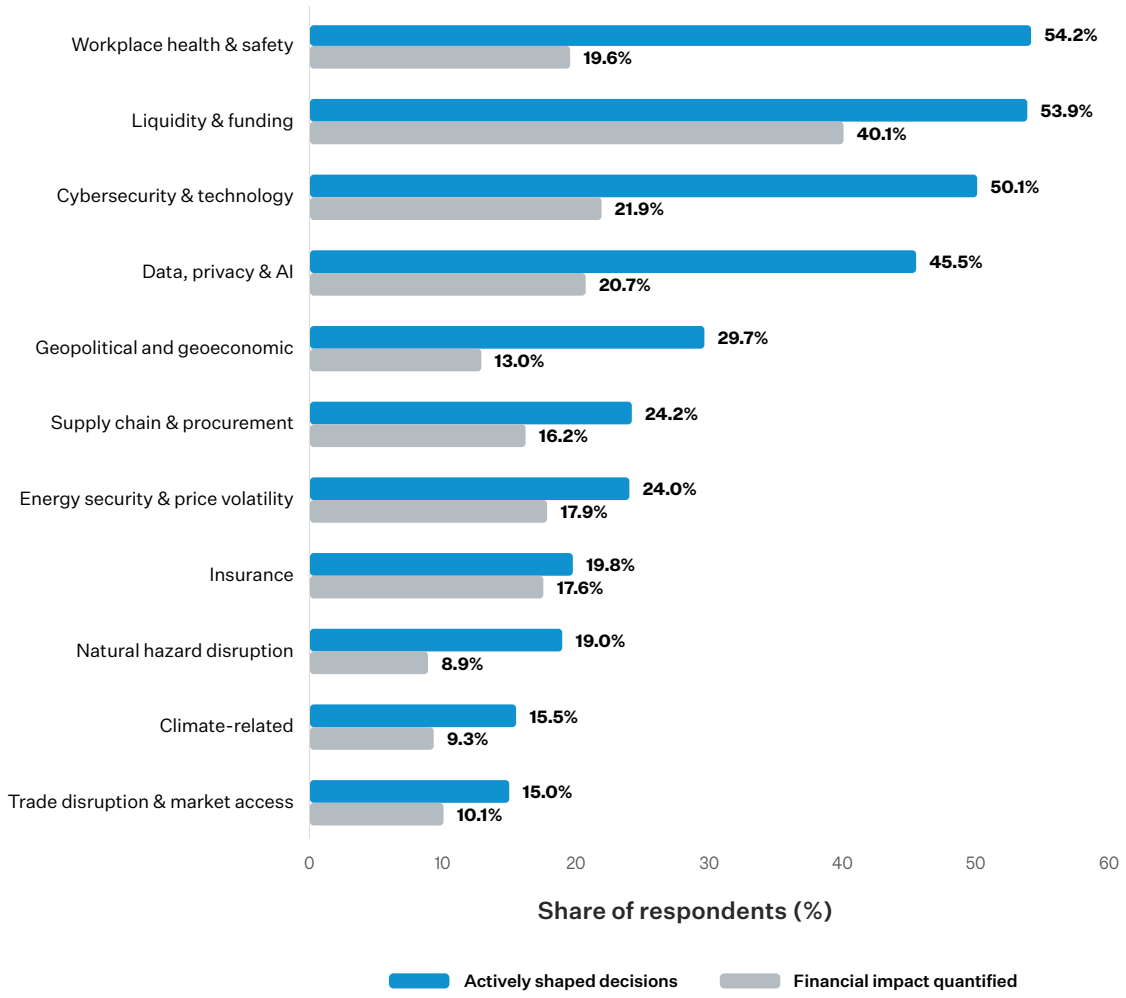
Liquidity and funding risk had the highest rate of financial quantification: 40.1% had quantified the potential financial impacts and a further 44.7% had reviewed potential impacts without quantifying them. For cyber and technology disruption 21.9% had quantified impacts; for data, privacy and AI, 20.7%; and for geopolitical and geoeconomic risk, 13.0%.

40.1%

had quantified the potential financial impacts of liquidity and funding risks.

Figure 2 compares the overall response percentages for the two core questions. For each risk, it shows the percentage who said it had actively shaped board decisions alongside the percentage who said its potential financial impact had been quantified.

Figure 2: Decision impact and financial quantification by risk area



Looking at respondents who said a risk actively shaped decisions shows how often its financial impact was also quantified. Among respondents who said liquidity and funding had actively shaped decisions, 62.0% had quantified the financial impact. The equivalent figures were 41.8% for data, privacy & AI; 40.2% for cyber and technology disruption; 34.0% for geopolitical and geoeconomic risk; and 32.4% for workplace health and safety. A risk can legitimately shape a decision without a precise dollar value, but the gap matters where boards are making trade-offs between investment, insurance, risk appetite and balance sheet capacity.

A five-year comparison is directional rather than like-for-like. The 2021 *New Zealand Survey of Risk* reported that fewer than a quarter of respondents were identifying environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks, with fewer still integrating ESG risks into their risk management framework, and even fewer evaluating financial exposure.

The current survey asks more specific questions about climate and natural hazards, so the results cannot be directly compared. However, the current findings show financial evaluation remains less developed than board engagement for several external risks.

What boards should focus on now

- Which risks have actively shaped a board decision in the past 12 months and what changed as a result?
- Which material risks are still expressed mainly in qualitative terms, even though they influence investment, pricing, insurance or capital decisions?
- Where would a financial range, sensitivity analysis or scenario test materially improve the board's decision-making?
- Does the current risk assessment connect financial, technology, people and external risks rather than treating them as separate categories?

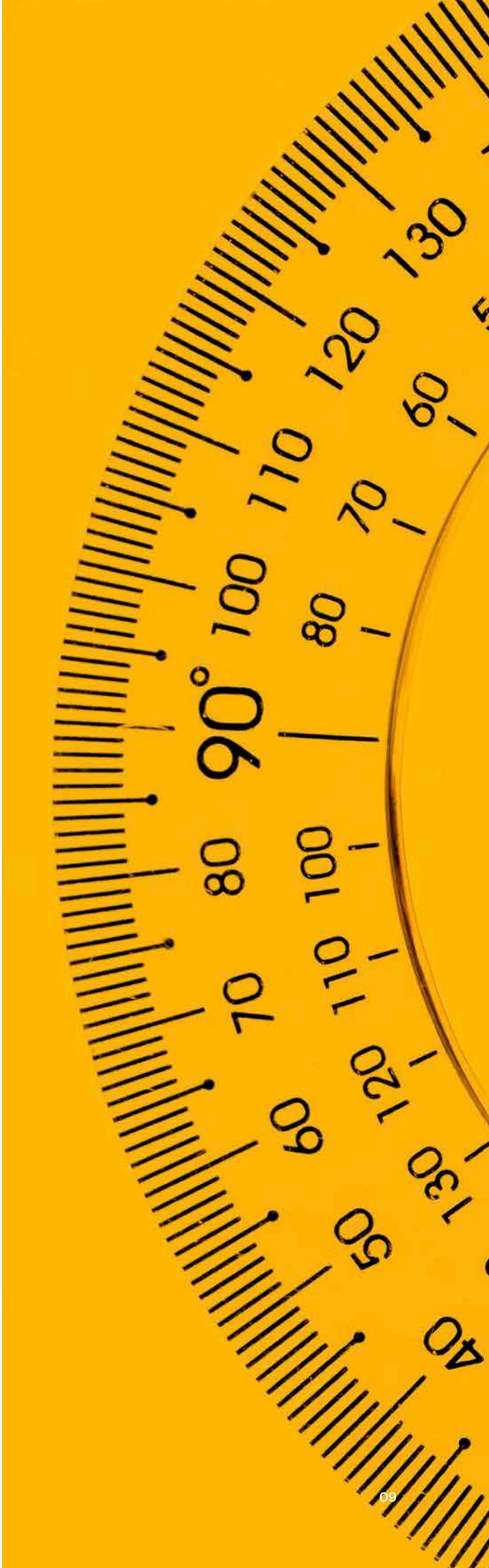


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2.

Geopolitical risk has moved into business decisions

The external context has shifted quickly. The *Global Risks Report 2026* ranks geoeconomic confrontation as the most severe global risk over the next two years. The New Zealand results from the World Economic Forum's Executive Opinion Survey, published in the Global Risks Report, identify economic downturn and lack of economic opportunity or unemployment as the top two national risks, with disruption to a systemically important supply chain in fifth place.

The *2025 Director Sentiment Survey* showed the same issue moving up the governance agenda: 45.2% of directors selected global economic growth/geopolitical uncertainty as the top impediment to New Zealand's economic performance, while the proportion selecting rising geopolitical volatility among their board's top three strategic issues almost doubled.

The 2026 survey goes a step further by testing what boards have done in response to geopolitical and geoeconomic risk. Nearly half of respondents (46%) adjusted investment timing or capital allocation, 43.6% reviewed market or customer concentration, 39.4% undertook scenario analysis, 36.7% discussed energy resilience or backup supply, 34.3% reviewed insurance implications and 28.1% reviewed supply chain concentration. Around one in five respondents (19.1%) selected none of the listed actions.

46%

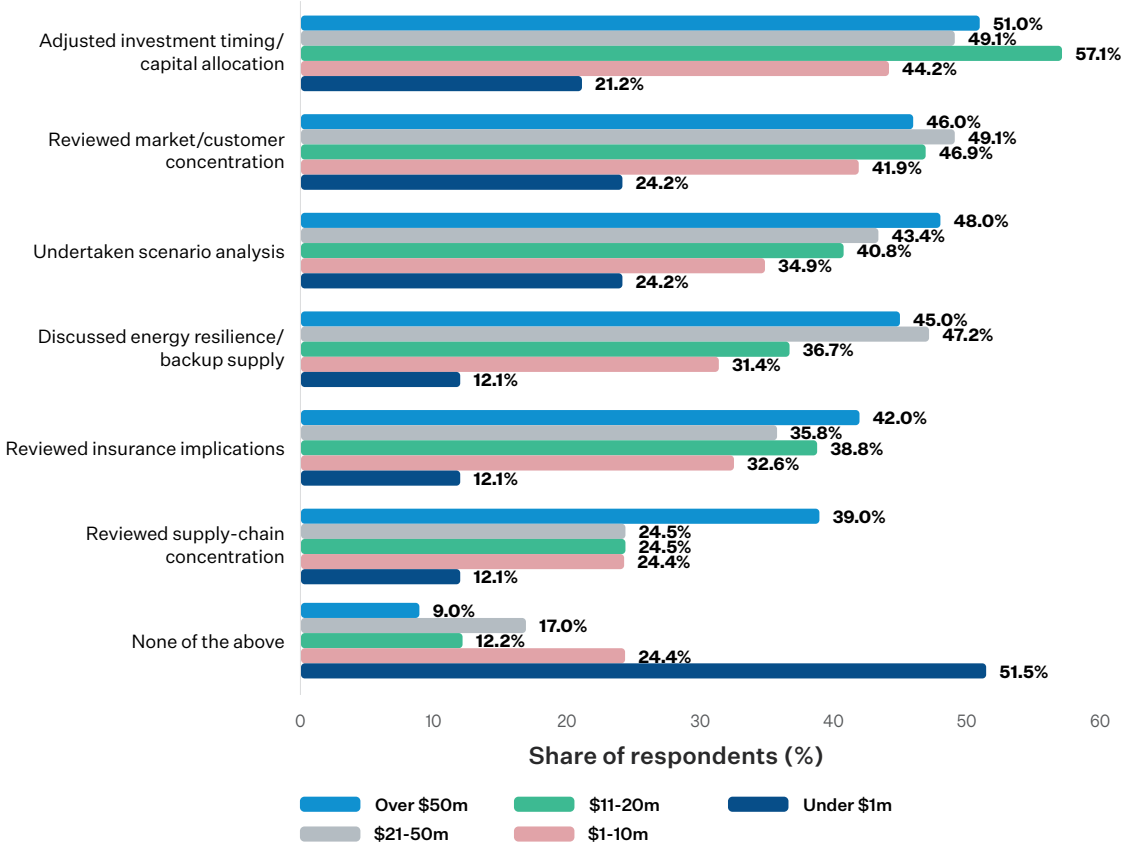
had adjusted investment timing or capital allocation in response to geopolitical or geoeconomic risk.

Among respondents who said geopolitical and geoeconomic risk had actively shaped decisions and who also answered the geopolitical action question, 64% had reviewed market/customer concentration, 58% had undertaken scenario analysis, 56% had adjusted investment timing or capital allocation, 50% had reviewed supply chain concentration, 46% had discussed energy resilience or backup supply and 44% had reviewed insurance implications. Only 4% selected none of the actions.

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As demonstrated in Figure 3, the pattern varies by organisation revenue or budget, although not consistently across every action. Respondents from organisations with revenue or budgets of less than $1 million reported the lowest uptake of all of the listed actions and 51.5% selected none, compared with 9.0% of those with revenue or budgets of more than $50 million. The three middle revenue bands generally sit between those endpoints, but individual actions vary. Organisation revenue or budget is therefore part of the picture, alongside differences in exposure, operating model and access to specialist capability.

Figure 3: Geopolitical and geoeconomic risk actions by organisation revenue/budget



The not-for-profit (NFP) respondents showed a different pattern, with 38.9% selecting none of the listed geopolitical actions, compared with 10.0% of medium-to-large private companies. That may reflect different exposure to markets and supply chains. Selecting none of the listed actions does not establish that no action was taken.

What boards should focus on now

- Which customers, suppliers, markets, funding arrangements or insurance assumptions are most exposed to geopolitical or trade shifts?
- Which geopolitical or trade developments would be material enough to change investment timing, capital allocation or market strategy?
- Does the board receive early indicators that connect geopolitical developments to the organisation's own costs, demand, supply and financing?
- How can the organisation access specialist advice when it is needed and has the board agreed the trigger?

Geopolitical fragmentation: why supply chain resilience matters more than efficiency

David Andrews, Supply Chain Risk Specialist, Marsh

For decades, organisations have driven supply chain optimisation for efficiency gains: just-in-time inventory, single-source suppliers, concentrated logistics networks. While these programmes have delivered marginal cost reductions, they have also created significant concentration risks exposed to geopolitical instability since Covid-19.

The Iran conflict's disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy corridors, has pushed fuel and freight costs sharply higher. For New Zealand, this has been felt in construction costs, material availability and labour constraints across the economy.

New Zealand's exposure is acute. A sizeable part of New Zealand's economy is reliant on agricultural exports, tourism and imported materials for construction and manufacturing. Heavy dependence on road-based logistics across long distances means fuel volatility cascades immediately into operational costs. Unlike larger economies with domestic alternatives, New Zealand's economy has limited flexibility to absorb sustained supply chain shocks.

What complicates this further is business interruption underinsurance. Many organisations continue to declare business interruption values based on pre-disruption timelines. Those assumptions are being tested by a more volatile supply chain environment, where shipping disruption and delays in critical materials can materially extend recovery after a major loss. Organisations with indemnity periods and limits of liability set two or three years ago may find that both are no longer adequate when disruption hits.

Directors are now asking questions such as: How exposed are we to supply chain concentration? What alternatives do we have if disruption hits? Have we modelled the cost impacts? Does our insurance reflect realistic recovery timelines?

The implication is strategic. Now more than ever, resilience requires supply chain diversification, investment in contingency planning and insurance that reflects actual recovery timelines. In an age of disorder, efficiency alone is not a business strategy.

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3.

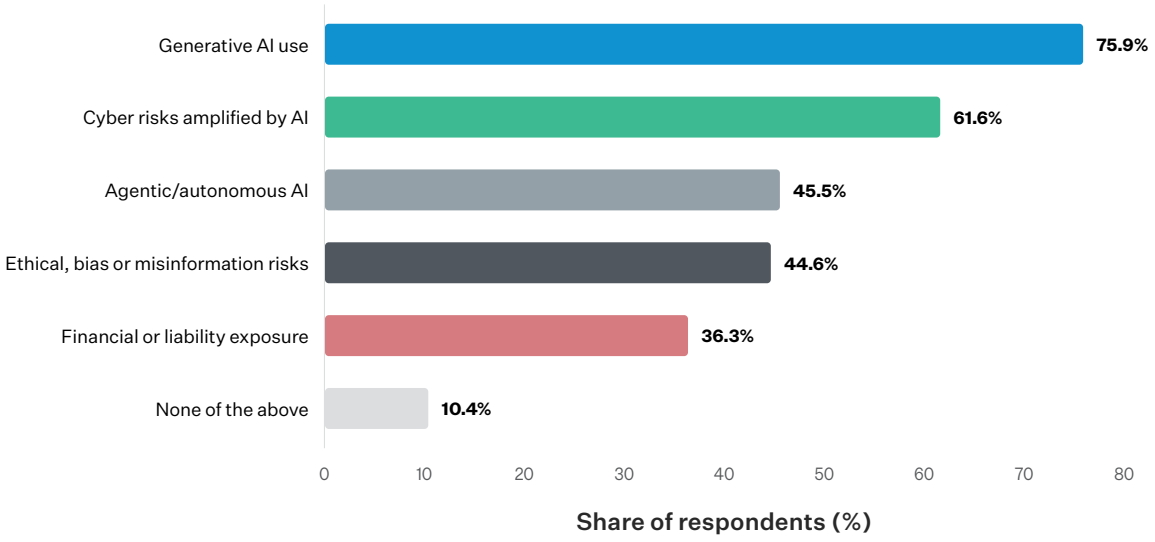
AI is mainstream, but governance is still forming

AI has moved well beyond a specialist technology discussion. Among respondents to the AI-topic question, nearly 76% had discussed generative AI use, 61.6% had discussed cyber risks amplified by AI-enabled threats, 45.5% agentic or autonomous AI systems, and 44.6% had discussed ethical, bias or misinformation risks. Financial or liability exposure arising from AI use was discussed by 36.3%, while only 10.4% selected none of the AI topics (see Figure 4).

75.9%

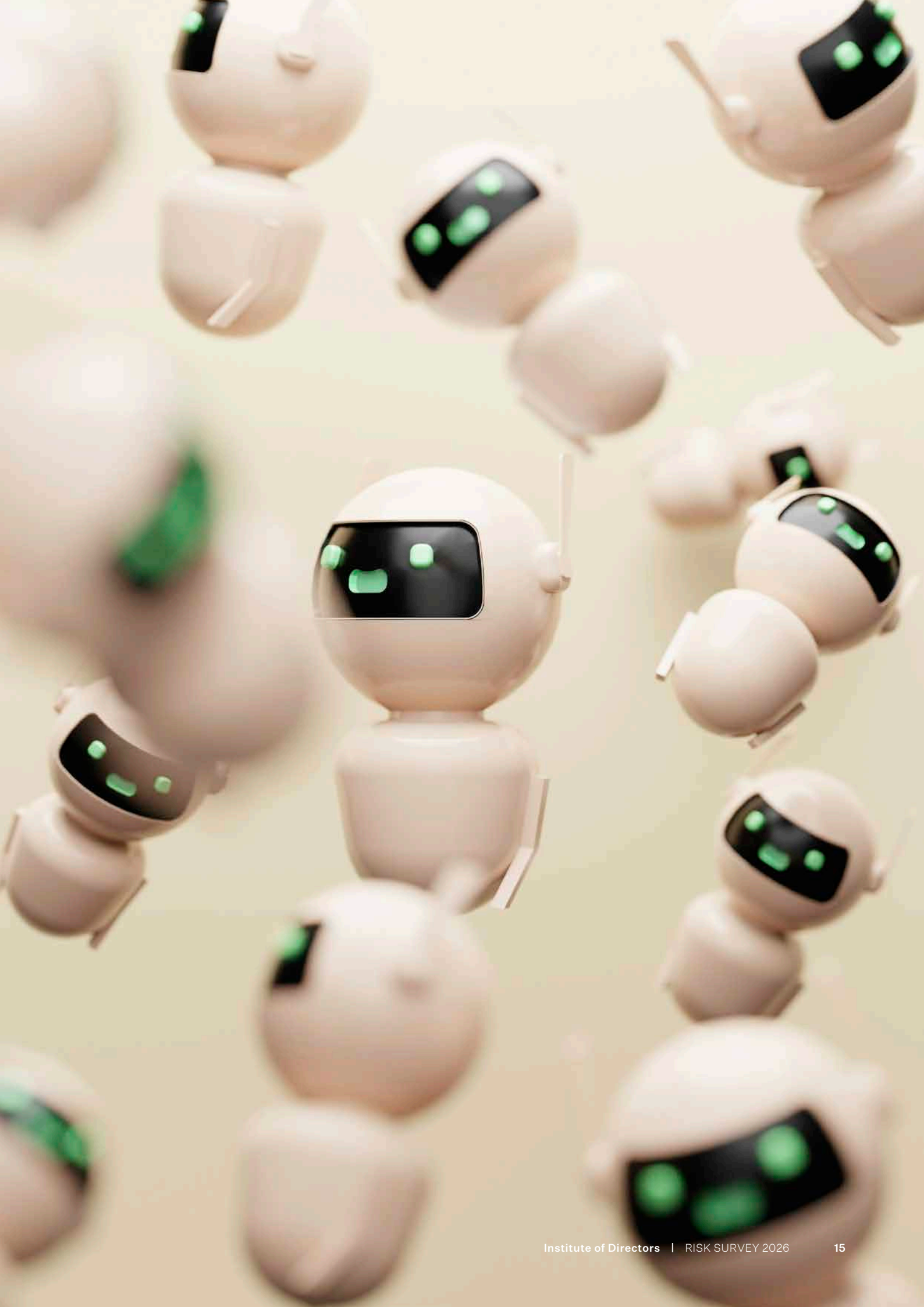
had discussed use of generative AI within the organisation, but the financial or liability exposure of AI was discussed by only **36.3%**.

Figure 4: AI risk topics discussed by boards



NB: Multiple responses permitted

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Among respondents who said data, privacy and AI-related risk had actively shaped board decisions, discussion of specific AI issues was higher: 88.8% had discussed generative AI use, 77.6% AI-amplified cyber risk, 61.8% agentic AI, and 56.6% financial or liability exposure. Separately, across all respondents to the financial impact question, 20.7% had quantified the potential financial impact of data, privacy and AI-related risk. These results record board discussion, not whether AI had been deployed or the maturity of the organisation's AI governance arrangements.

AI also appears in the workforce data. Nearly 50% had discussed automation or AI as a response to workforce or productivity challenges and 47.0% had discussed capability, training or skills gaps associated with AI adoption.

There are also differences based on organisation revenue/budget. Discussion of AI or automation for productivity rises from 30.3% among respondents from organisations with revenue or budgets of less than $1 million to 45.3% for $1-10 million, 46.0% for $11-20 million, 50.9% for $21-50 million and 57.0% for more than $50 million. AI-related capability or skills gaps show a similar, although less linear pattern: 27.3%, 44.2%, 44.0%, 54.7% and 52.0% respectively.

Organisation type adds another distinction. AI-amplified cyber risk had been discussed by 48.1% of NFP respondents, compared with 72.7% of medium-to-large private company respondents. Use of AI or automation for workforce or productivity challenges was 34.3% among NFPs and 62.8% among medium-to-large private companies. These results may partly reflect organisation size and operating model, but they show clear differences in reported board discussion across organisation types and revenue groups.

The *2025 Director Sentiment Survey NFP Insights* provides context for this sectoral difference. NFP directors reported lower levels of discussion than other respondents on cyber risk and ability to respond (42.5% versus 63.5%) and on the ethics, impacts and opportunities of AI (31.7% versus 42.1%). At the same time, 49% were assessing the impact of digital technology on their organisation and skills needs, up from 31.5% in 2024, while 45.7% were exploring its potential to improve productivity, up from 28.4%. The measures differ from the Risk Survey, but they point to growing digital attention alongside continuing differences in risk and capability oversight.

The broader 2025 Director Sentiment Survey found 38.5% of directors identified AI/digital acceleration and disruption as a top strategic issue, 60.6% said their boards were working with management on how technology or AI could enhance productivity, while 39.0% said their board had discussed the ethics, impacts and opportunities of AI. The Global Risks Report 2026 reinforces the longer-term significance of AI risk: adverse outcomes of AI technologies rise from 30th in its two-year global ranking to fifth over 10 years.

What boards should focus on now

- Where is AI being used across the organisation, including third-party tools, shadow use and automated systems?
- Which AI-related cyber, data, liability and decision risks are material enough to require monitoring by the board or financial assessment?
- Does the workforce and capability plan address both AI-enabled productivity and the skills, training, role design and controls needed as AI use expands?

How AI is changing the cyber risk equation for boards

Jono Soo, Head of Cyber, Marsh New Zealand

Artificial intelligence is accelerating business productivity. It is also increasing cyber risk. For boards and directors, the shift isn't simply that AI is another technology to adopt. AI is changing the speed, scale and sophistication of cyberattacks, and the tools available to threat actors.

Threat actors are already using AI to improve phishing, business email compromise and social engineering. Generative AI allows attackers to create convincing emails, fake documents, cloned voices and highly personalised messages in seconds. This reduces the skill required to launch credible attacks. AI can also help adversaries to automate reconnaissance, identify vulnerabilities faster and adapt intrusion techniques more quickly than many traditional defensive processes can respond.

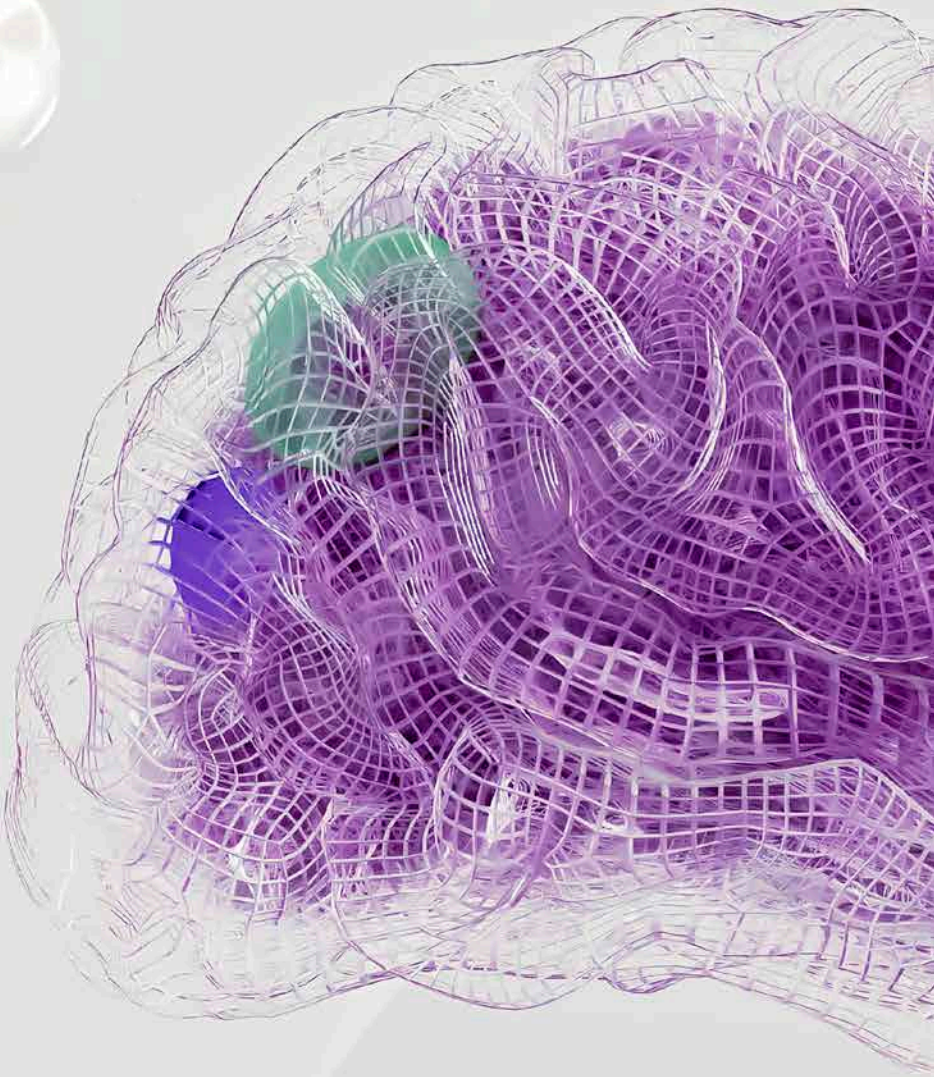
Recent developments related to Mythos, an advanced AI model from Anthropic, have sharpened these concerns. It has been reported as demonstrating advanced capability to identify previously unknown software vulnerabilities and, in some cases, chain smaller weaknesses into more serious exploit paths. This has shifted the cybersecurity conversation: boards now need to consider a realistic future in which frontier AI models materially compress the time between vulnerability discovery and weaponisation. That increases risk not only for large enterprises but also for critical suppliers, legacy platforms and open-source components embedded across the technology stack.

At the same time, companies are introducing new internal risks through rapid AI adoption. Sensitive data can be exposed through poorly governed use of public AI tools, insecure integrations or inadequate vendor controls. AI models and applications can also create new points of failure, including data leakage, model manipulation, prompt injection and overreliance on inaccurate outputs. In many cases, businesses deploy AI faster than security, legal and risk functions can establish effective guardrails.

For directors, AI risk is a business resilience issue, not just a technical one. Board oversight should focus on where AI is deployed, what data it can access and which third parties are involved. It should also ensure cybersecurity risk management, monitoring and incident response are evolving at the same pace.

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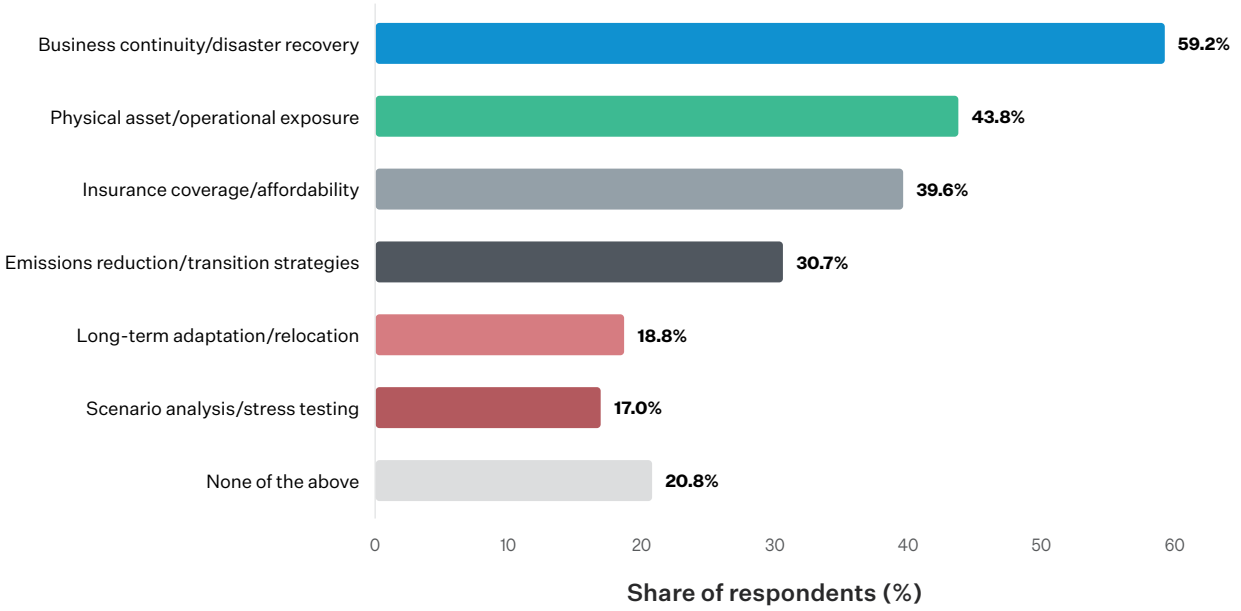
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Physical resilience focuses on continuity and exposure

Boards are taking action on natural hazard and climate-related risk, but the response places more emphasis on continuity, exposure and insurance review than on scenario analysis or long-term adaptation. Nearly 60% had discussed business continuity and disaster recovery, 43.8% reviewed exposure of key assets or operations to physical risks, and 39.6% reviewed insurance coverage and affordability. Nearly 31% considered emissions reduction or transition strategies (see Figure 5).

Scenario analysis and long-term adaptation were less common. Only 17.0% had undertaken scenario analysis or stress testing and 18.8% considered long-term adaptation or relocation. Nearly 21% selected none of the listed actions. The survey did not establish the time horizons used for continuity planning or scenario analysis.

Figure 5: Natural hazard and climate-related risk actions



NB: Multiple responses permitted

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Google Deepmind on Unsplash

Respondents who said climate-related risk had actively shaped decisions and answered the action question reported taking more of the listed actions: 83.0% had reviewed physical exposure, 83.0% had discussed business continuity and disaster recovery planning, 77.4% had reviewed insurance coverage and affordability, and 43.4% had undertaken scenario analysis or stress testing. In contrast, among respondents who had not considered climate-related financial impacts and answered the action question, only 3.5% had undertaken scenario analysis and 6.9% had considered long-term adaptation or relocation.

The pattern also varies by organisation revenue or budget. Scenario analysis was reported by 6.1% of respondents from organisations with revenue or budgets of less than $1 million and 29.0% of those from organisations with more than $50 million. Natural hazard insurance coverage and affordability had been reviewed by 12.1% of the smallest group and 58.0% of the largest. The proportion selecting none of the actions falls from 45.5% to 9.0%.

This pattern sits against the longer-term global outlook. Over its 10-year horizon, the *Global Risks Report 2026* ranks extreme weather as the most severe risk, biodiversity loss second and critical change to Earth systems third. The 2025 Director Sentiment Survey also found only 45.6% of directors regularly reviewed the adequacy of their risk management approach to physical climate and environmental impacts. While the measures are different, they suggest boards should test whether operational preparedness is connected to long-term asset, capital and strategy decisions.

17%

had undertaken scenario analysis or stress testing for climate or natural hazard risks, compared with **59.2%** discussing business continuity and disaster recovery.

What boards should focus on now

- Which physical hazards could materially change asset values, operating continuity, insurance terms or financing costs?
- Are continuity planning and insurance reviews connected to long-term capital allocation, asset life and location decisions?
- What scenario or stress test would reveal a strategic vulnerability that routine risk reporting may not show?

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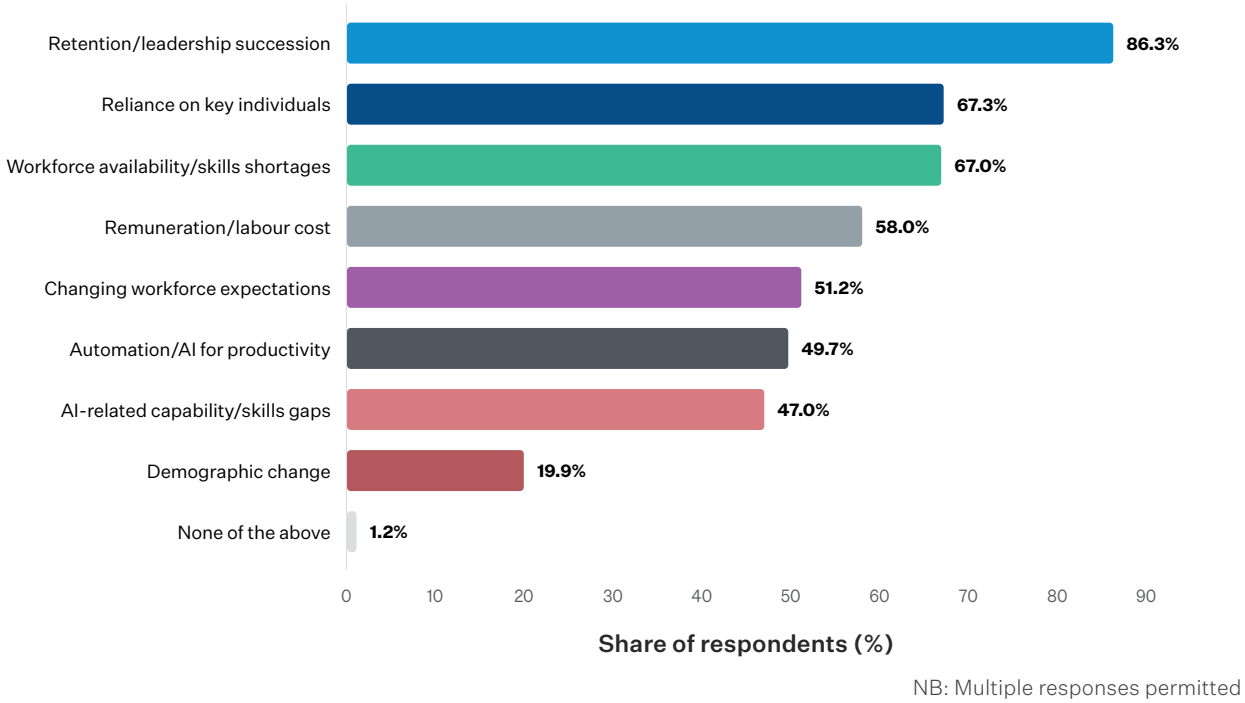
People and capability shape risk readiness

People risk is one of the broadest areas of board discussion in the survey. More than 86% had discussed retention of staff or leadership succession, 67.3% reliance on a small number of key individuals, and 67.0% workforce availability or skills shortages. Remuneration pressure or labour cost was discussed by 58.0% and changing workforce expectations by 51.2% (see Figure 6).

49.7%

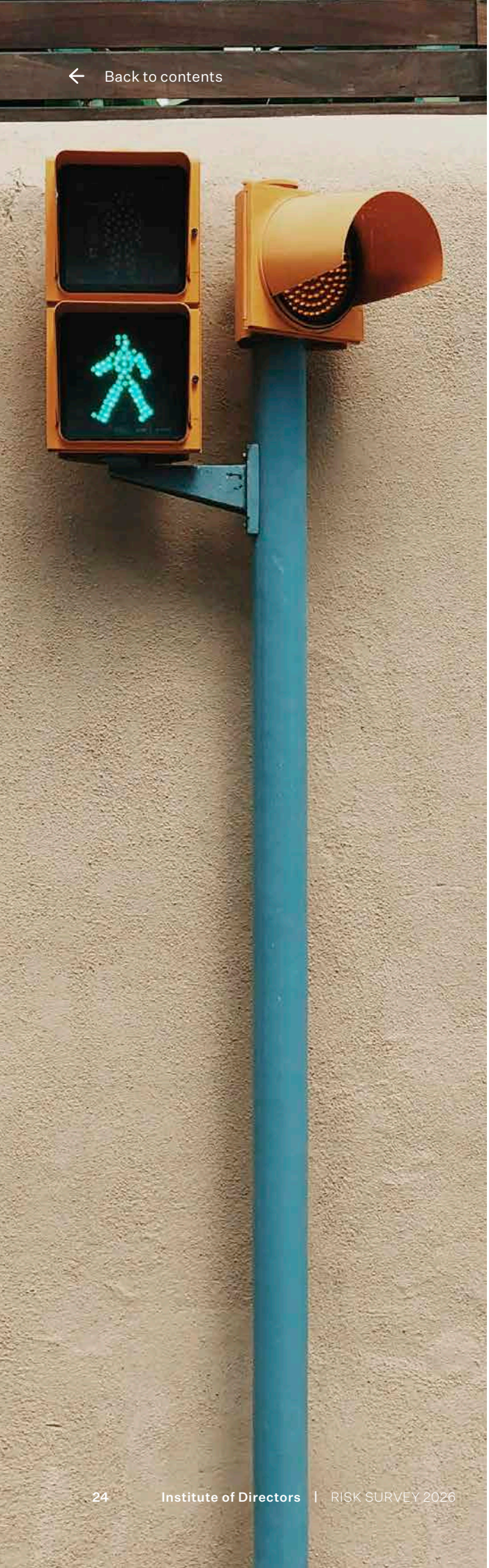
discussed automation or AI as a way to address workforce or productivity challenges.

Figure 6: Workforce and people-related risks discussed by boards



NB: Multiple responses permitted

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People and capability considerations also intersect with technology. Nearly 50% discussed automation or AI as a way to address workforce or productivity challenges and 47.0% discussed AI-related capability, training or skills gaps. Reported discussion was higher among respondents from organisations with revenue or budgets of more than $50 million on both measures: 57.0% had discussed AI or automation for productivity and 52.0% AI-related capability gaps, compared with 30.3% and 27.3% respectively among organisations with revenue or budgets of less than $1 million.

The 2025 Director Sentiment Survey adds context to the relationship between AI, productivity and workforce planning. More than 60% of directors said their boards were working with management on how technology or AI could enhance productivity and processes, while 25.7% said their boards were investigating the use of technology or AI to reduce headcount. The measures are different, but alongside this year's risk survey findings they show the workforce implications of AI extend beyond skills and capability to how work is organised and resourced.

Workplace health and safety provides another example of the gap between board attention and financial quantification. It actively shaped decisions for 54.2% of respondents and was discussed at a high level by a further 39.2%, yet only 19.6% had quantified the potential financial impact and 29.1% had not considered it financially. That does not reduce health and safety to a financial metric, but it does raise the question of whether boards are seeking to understand the operational, regulatory, workforce and financial consequences together.

The persistence of people risk is evident in earlier surveys. In the 2018 risk survey, loss of a key person was the leading internal risk, with nearly 83% rating it medium or high, and talent attraction and retention was also prominent. In the 2021 survey, lost productivity caused by a lack of skilled workers ranked third and workplace health and safety fifth. The questions are not directly comparable, but the form of the workforce challenge has changed, while dependence on capability, continuity and key people remains.

Capability also extends to a board's access to specialist advice, the frequency of risk review, board involvement in insurance decisions and reporting, and the financial tools available to absorb or transfer risk.

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Behzad Ghaffarian on Unsplash

Risk oversight in practice

Formal risk routines are well established across much of the sample, with 63.4% reviewing enterprise-level risk quarterly or more often, including 16.8% monthly or more frequently. A further 13.5% review twice a year and 16.5% annually. Only 3.3% reported reviewing less than once a year or never, while another 3.3% were unsure.

External advice is common but not universal, with 21.1% using external advisers regularly and 42.3% occasionally. A further 22.9% use them rarely and 13.7% never. Among the 301 respondents who answered the adviser type question, 58.5% used an auditor/accountant, 47.5% legal advisers, 47.2% an insurance broker or insurer, 41.9% technology or cyber advisers, and 25.9% risk or resilience specialists. A further 10.6% selected 'Other' and 9.0% selected none of the listed adviser types.

Insurance is also visible at board level, with 29.8% saying the board was actively involved in decisions during the most recent insurance renewal or purchase process and 31.5% receiving detailed reporting. Another 28.6% reported limited involvement; 7.4% said the board was not involved and 2.7% selected not applicable (see Figure 7).

Reliance on internal reserves and balance sheet capacity is the most common financial risk approach, with 45.7% saying their organisation relies on internal reserves and the balance sheet to absorb most risks. Nearly 21% primarily rely on reserves but use insurance or hedging for selected risks; 23.9% decide case-by-case using a mix of internal capacity and external tools; and 7.1% primarily use external financial tools. A further 2.4% were unsure (see Figure 8).

Risk practices also vary by organisation revenue or budget, although the pattern is not consistent across every measure (see Table 1). Reliance on internal reserves generally falls as revenue increases, while active or detailed board involvement in insurance rises. The proportion selecting no listed climate or natural hazard actions also falls steadily as organisation revenue increases. Adviser use and the frequency of formal risk review are less consistent. These differences should be read in context: exposure, organisational complexity, balance sheet structure and access to expertise all vary.

Figure 7: Board involvement in insurance renewal or purchase

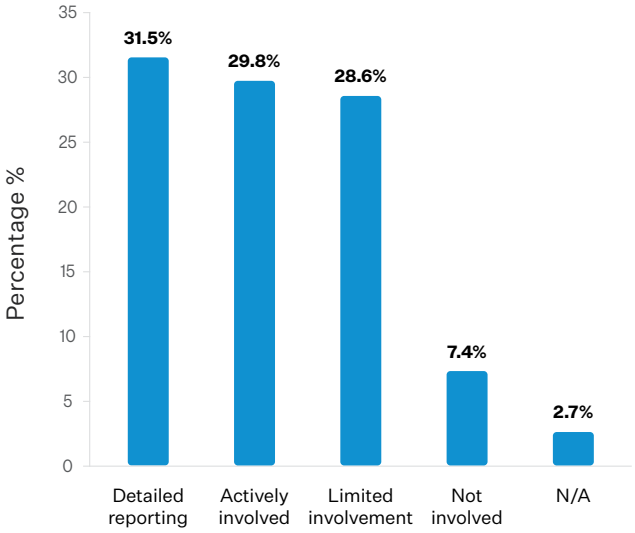
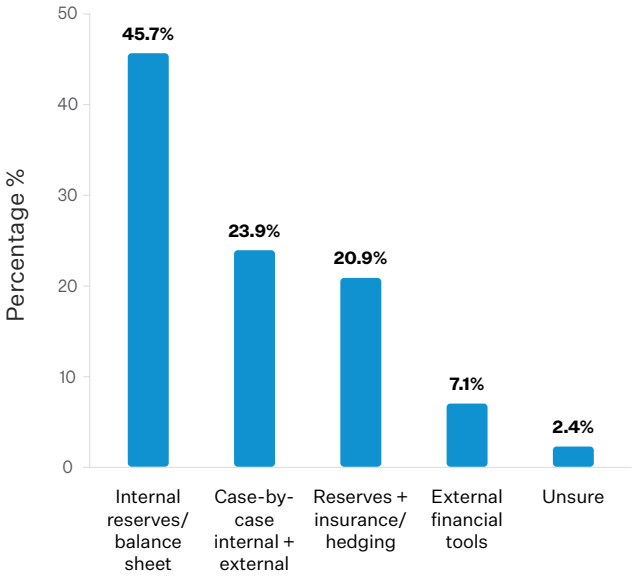


Figure 8: Financial risk management approach



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Table 1: Risk oversight and actions by organisation revenue/budget

Indicator	Under $1m	$1-10m	$11-20m	$21-50m	Over $50m
Rely on reserves/balance sheet to absorb most risks	75.8%	53.5%	52.0%	45.3%	28.0%
Use external advisers regularly or occasionally	36.4%	55.8%	48.0%	77.4%	80.0%
Review enterprise risk quarterly or more often	56.2%	55.3%	76.0%	66.0%	68.7%
Board active/receives detailed insurance reporting	51.5%	52.3%	60.0%	67.9%	71.0%
Selected no listed geopolitical actions	51.5%	24.4%	12.2%	17.0%	9.0%
Selected no listed climate/natural hazard actions	45.5%	34.9%	16.0%	13.2%	9.0%

What boards should focus on now

- Where is the organisation dependent on individuals rather than roles, systems or a credible succession pipeline?
- Does succession planning cover the CEO, other critical leaders and specialist roles whose loss would interrupt delivery?
- Is the frequency of risk review matched to how quickly the organisation's material risks can change?
- Where would external challenge, scenario capability or different risk-financing tools materially improve a board decision?



Methodology and respondent profile

The IoD Risk Survey 2026 was conducted online from 11 June to 3 July 2026. The survey received 348 responses.

Percentages are based on respondents who answered each question or risk item. Single-response distributions are rounded to one decimal place, with minor adjustments so totals equal 100%. Combined measures are calculated from the underlying counts rather than by adding rounded percentages. Where respondents could select multiple responses, the responses can total more than 100%.

The findings describe respondents' reported board practices, not the effectiveness of controls. Subgroup comparisons are descriptive and do not establish causation; differences may reflect organisational exposure, type, scale and other factors. Smaller groups should be interpreted cautiously.

The open-text responses were used to identify recurring themes and to test whether material issues fell outside the structured questions. External data from the Global Risks Reports 2016 and 2026, Marsh's Navigating Global Risks in the Pacific 2026, the 2025 Director Sentiment Survey and earlier IoD/Marsh risk surveys is used selectively for context. Earlier survey respondent populations, questions and response scales differ, so comparisons are described as directional unless directly comparable.

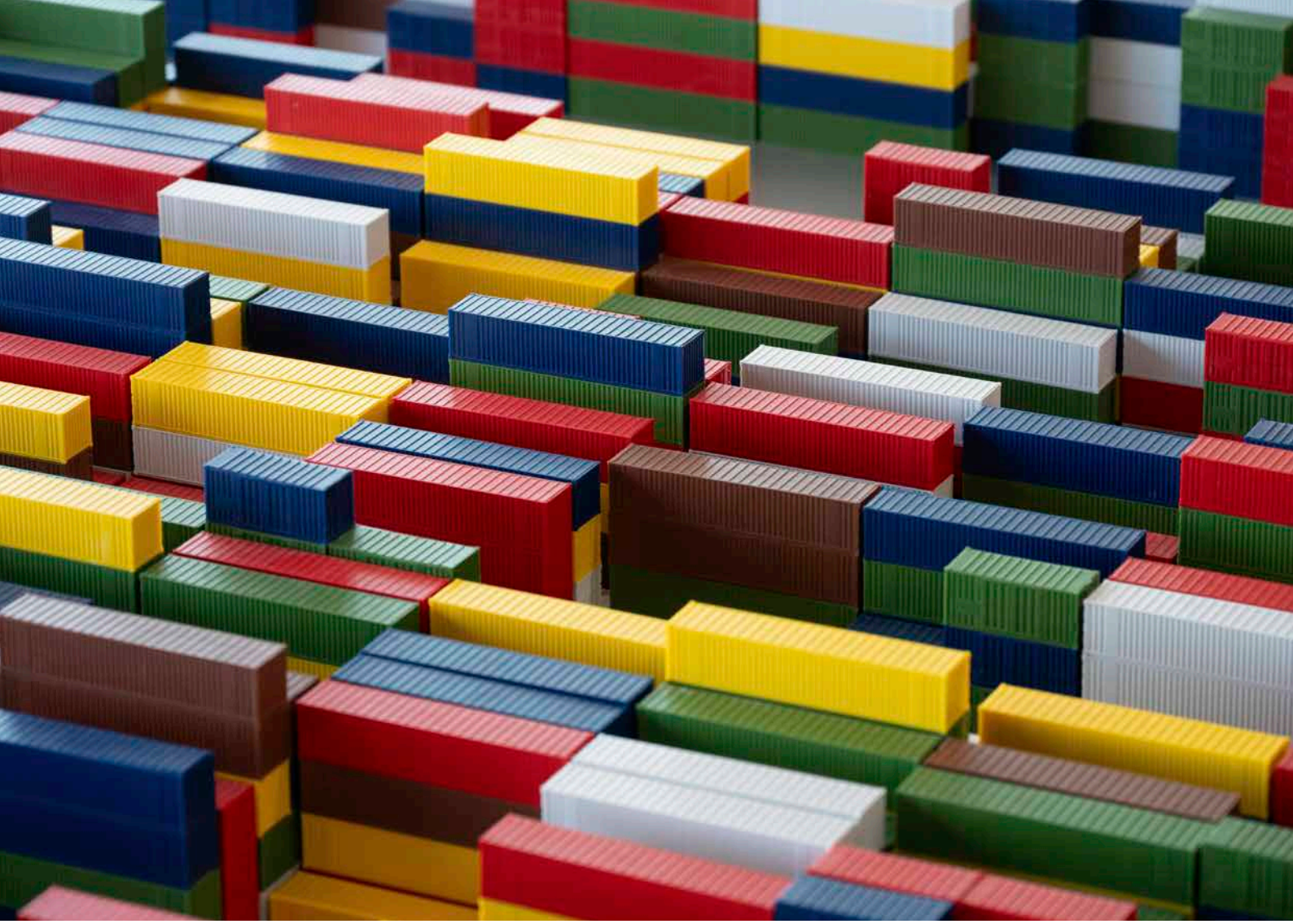
Two-thirds of respondents (66.6%) were chairs or non-executive directors/trustees. Executive directors accounted for 15.2% and C-suite executives 14.6%, while 3.6% selected 'Other'. The respondent base is experienced, with 78.8% having six or more years' governance experience (see Table 2).

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Karolina Grabowska on Unsplash

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Table 2: Respondent profile

Profile	Category	Share
Primary role	Chair	26.9%
	Non-executive director/trustee	39.7%
	Executive director	15.2%
	C-suite executive	14.6%
	Other (e.g. consultant, retired)	3.6%
Governance experience	More than 10 years	55.2%
	6-10 years	23.6%
	3-5 years	15.2%
	Less than 3 years	6.0%
Organisation type	Medium to large private company	36.2%
	Not-for-profit organisation	32.3%
	Small company	10.2%
	Government organisation/state-owned enterprise	5.7%
	Publicly listed company including subsidiaries	6.3%
	Māori organisation/iwi	3.3%
	Local authority/council-controlled organisation	2.7%
	Other	3.3%
Revenue / budget	Over $50m	29.8%
	$21-50m	15.8%
	$11-20m	14.9%
	$1-10m	25.7%
	Under $1m	9.9%
	Unsure/prefer not to say	3.9%
Employees	200+	25.1%
	50-199	26.0%
	20-49	17.7%
	6-19	16.5%
	1-5	14.4%
	Sole trader	0.3%



Further resources

AI in the boardroom: A guide for directors

Chapter Zero New Zealand Board Toolkit

Climate scenario analysis

Cyber risk: A practical guide

D&O Insurance – the shifting sands of risk (2025)

Financial quantification: from climate risk to value creation

Health and Safety governance: A good practice guide

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