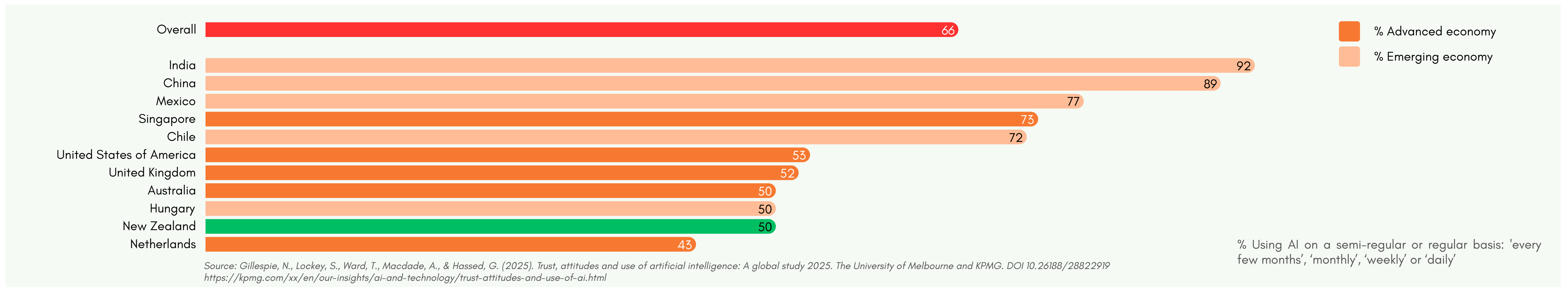


Beyond Access: The Economics of AI Adoption in New Zealand

Evidence from the World Internet Project New Zealand 2025

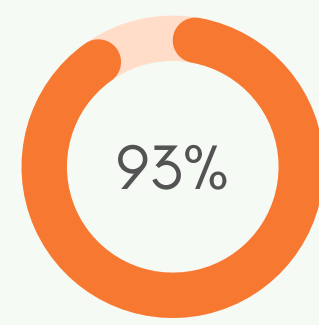
Despite near-universal internet access, only half of New Zealanders regularly use AI



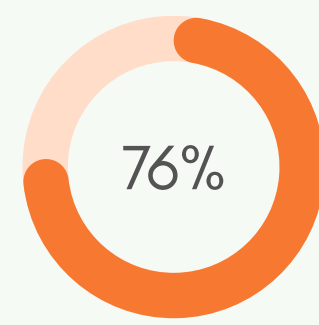
1. The New Digital Divide

For two decades, digital policy focused on expanding internet access. Today New Zealand is highly connected.

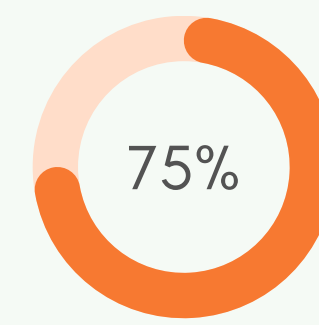
Internet connection from home



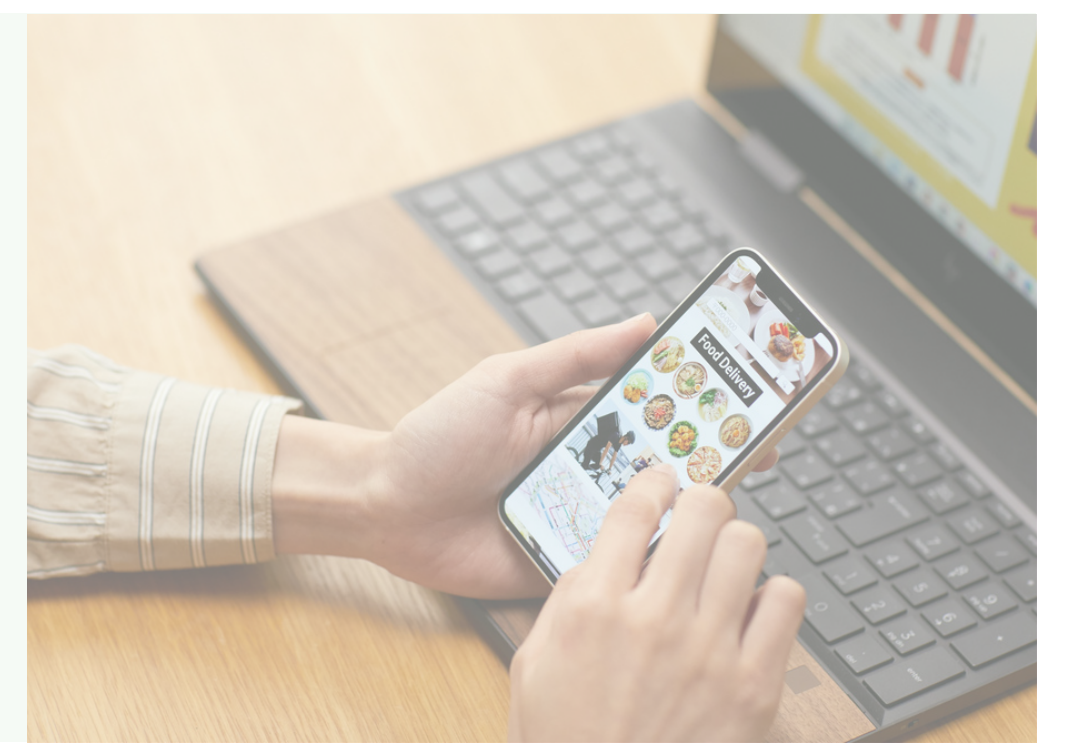
Fibre broadband



Mobile access



Most rate internet quality highly



2. Research Question

If internet access is widespread, who is using AI in New Zealand? And who is being left behind?



3. Methodology

Design:

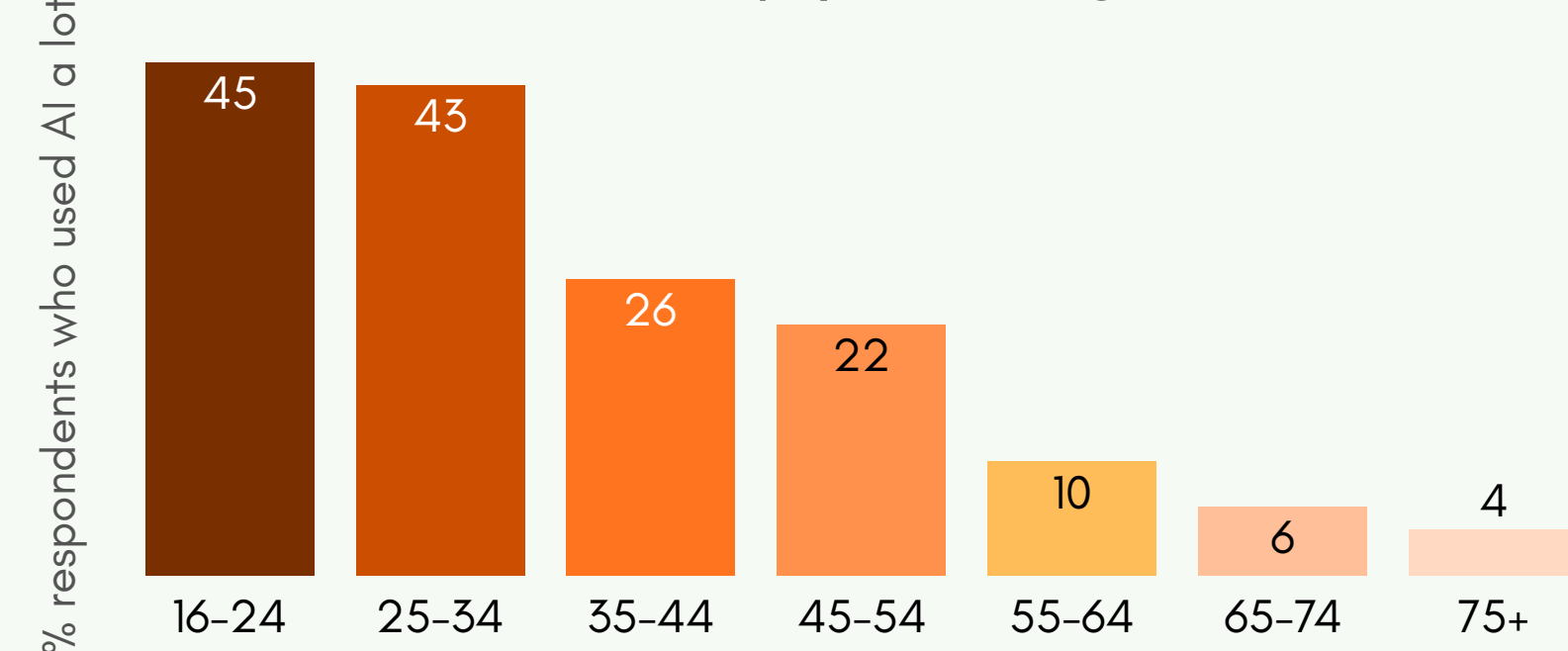
Quantitative online survey

Sample:

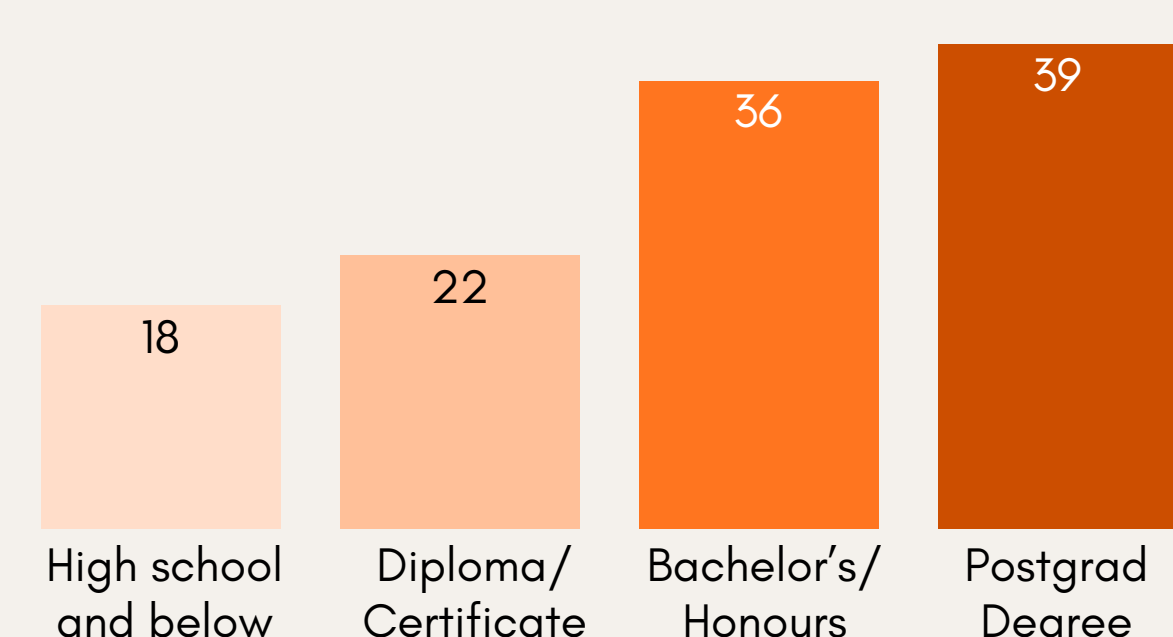
N = 2,063
New Zealand internet users

4. Gap in AI use

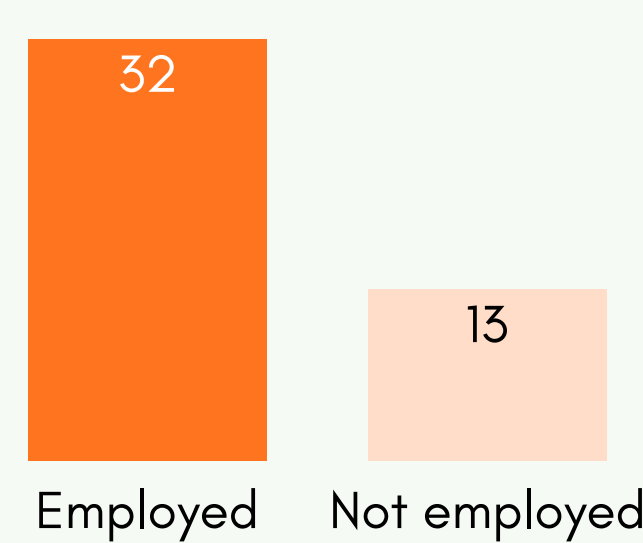
Falls sharply with age



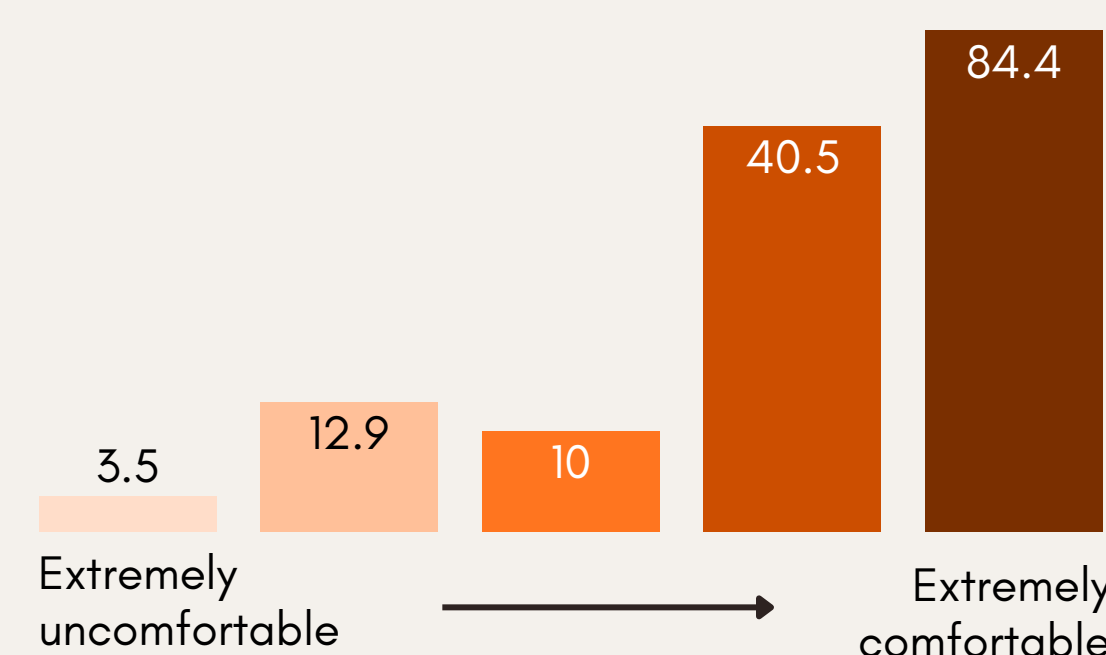
Higher education attainment associates with greater AI adoption



AI adoption is concentrated among those who were employed



Familiarity reduces concern and increases confidence



5. Economic Implications

Potential productivity gains remains unevenly distributed

Mix of productivity, learning and exploration, entertainment
57.5%

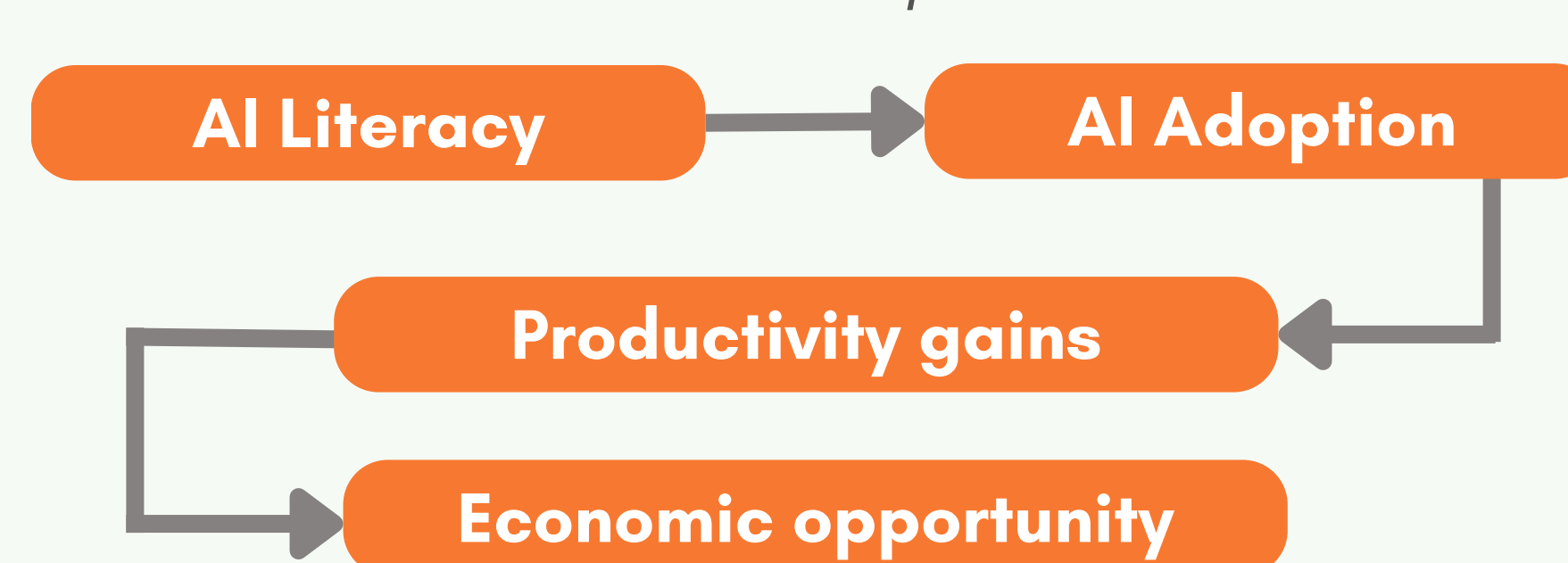
Learning and exploration 21.4%	Learn new things	59.5%
	See what it is like and how good it is	38.9%
Productivity 15.6%	Solve school/work-related problems	46.6%
	Process and simplify large chunks of text	37.3%
	Create information that I should create	23.8%

Entertainment
5.5%

Uncertainty about future labour market impacts

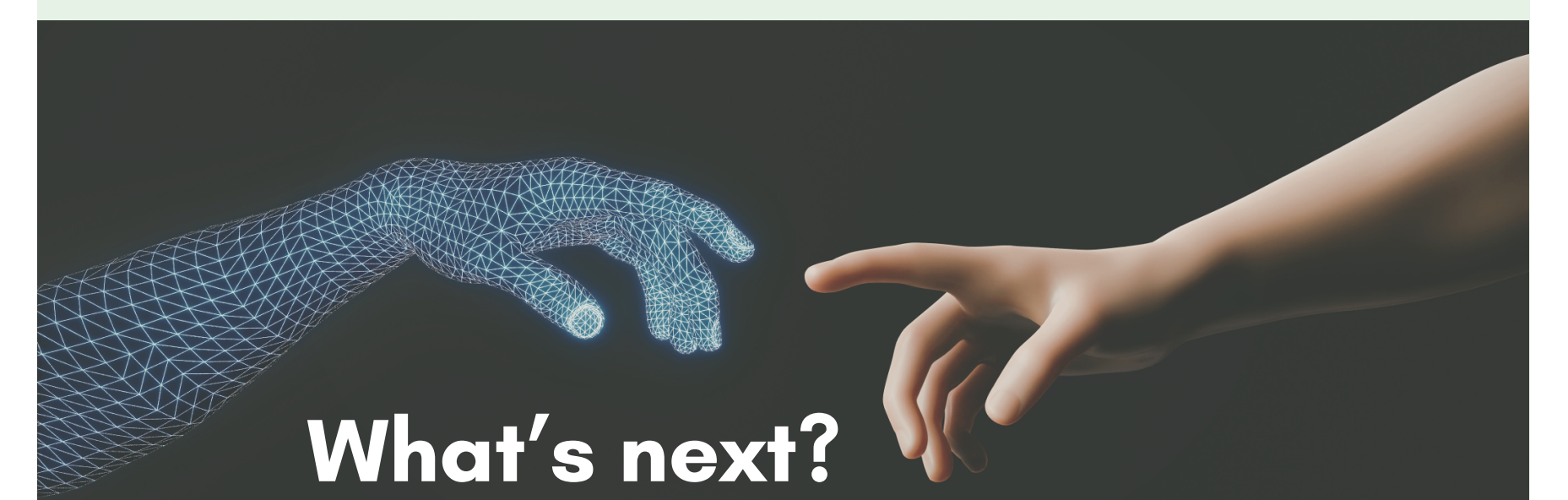


Human Capital



6. Key Takeaways

- ✓ Access solved.
- ✓ AI adoption uneven
- ✓ Human capital matters
- ✓ Capability is the new divide



What's next?

Build AI Capability

Move beyond basic digital literacy

Support Mid-Career Upskilling

Focus on older workers and non-users

Encourage Workplace Adoption

Increase exposure and experimentation

Develop Trusted AI Governance

Improve confidence while supporting innovation

The next digital divide is not connectivity.
It is **AI capability**.

