

# The Annual Interim Executive Survey 2025



Celebrating 15 years of leadership evolution  
– shaping the future of Interim Executive talent

**Watermark**  
SEARCH INTERNATIONAL


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# Overview

# Foreword

We are living in an era where disruption is no longer episodic – it is perpetual. Strategy is fluid, transformation is continuous, and the pressure to perform, pivot, and reinvent is relentless. The traditional playbook for leadership hasn't just aged, it's been outpaced.

The insights from this year's survey confirm a structural shift that's reshaping the leadership landscape at speed and scale: Interim Executive leadership is not a stopgap – it is a strategic force for leading at speed, under pressure, and across boundaries. The Australian Interim Executive market has reached a time to shift gear. These leaders are now being called in by design, not by default, mobilised to deliver progress in complexity, architect transformation during transition and embed impact precisely where it matters most.

As AI revolutionises what work is, how it is done, how decisions are made and how human-machine collaboration generates value, the role of leadership is being fundamentally reshaped. What's required now isn't evolution – it's elevation. Leadership must operate at a different altitude, grounded not in control or tradition, but in discernment, contextual intelligence, ethical clarity, and creative foresight.

Organisations don't just need more leadership – they need different leadership. The premium human capabilities required to move organisations forward – judgment, context, creativity, conscience and empathy – have become the new currency of enterprise value. And this is exactly what Interim Executive leaders bring to the table. It is their lived experience – across industries, crises, transitions, and transformations – that enables them to translate those capabilities into action. They lead with urgency and integrity, delivering clarity in complexity, decisions in ambiguity, and outcomes that matter. They activate the human advantage, applying it with precision and purpose in the moments that matter most.

Deloitte's *2024 Global Human Capital Trends* report highlighted the rising demand for leaders who can transcend traditional structures by operating across functions, geographies and technologies to unlock enterprise value. The *2025 Human Capital Trends* report builds on that foundation, emphasising a new leadership imperative: to embrace tension as a feature, not a flaw – and to navigate polarities such as stability and agility, automation and augmentation, experimentation and scale. Unlocking performance in this environment requires leaders who can hold those tensions productively. Interim Executives are uniquely equipped to do just that, bringing both the steadiness of experience and the elasticity of perspective. They are deployed with precision and empowered to architect continuously evolving work, culture, and leadership structures that unlock innovation, performance, and future readiness. This is where Interim Executive leaders deliver disproportionate impact: not by preserving the status quo, but by accelerating what's next while anchoring to what matters.

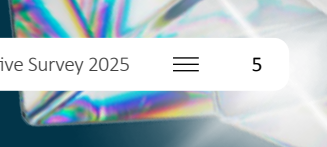
As organisations move from siloed collaboration to systemic co-dependency to scale and realise the full power of AI in an agentic future, the stakes rise even higher. Transformation no longer lives in isolated initiatives - it demands leaders who can operate across boundaries, navigate interdependencies, and align entire ecosystems toward shared outcomes. This is where Interim Executives deliver their greatest value. Their lived experience gives them cross-sector fluency, pattern recognition, and the ability to see the enterprise as an integrated whole – not isolated parts. They bring coherence to complexity, aligning agendas across domains, bridging transitions across time zones and forging accountability across shifting stakeholder landscapes. In a world where performance leaks through the gaps, Interim Executives are the connective tissue that holds the system together – and moves it forward.

As Einstein said, "You can't use an old map to explore a new world." Interim Executive leadership is the compass – guiding organisations through ambiguity, pace, and possibility.

The question is no longer whether to use Interim leadership. It's whether you're ready to compete without it.

**Nicole Scoble-Williams**  
Deloitte Global Future  
of Work Leader





# 15 years of data. Bold predictions for the next 15.

Welcome



**David Evans**  
Managing Partner  
Watermark Search

The Australian Interim Executive market is at an inflection point. What began as tactical gap-filling of key positions has evolved into strategic recruitment of leaders focused on business transformation. And the trajectory ahead promises even more profound change.

This milestone 15th edition of our Annual Interim Executive Survey captures exclusive insights from nearly 900 Interim Executives who have contributed to the largest and most comprehensive dataset about this market in Australia. Their collective experience, spanning recent assignments through Watermark and across the broader market, reveals five important trends that define executive leadership in 2025.

The data tells a compelling story: both sides of the market – hirers and executives – increasingly value Interim appointments. More professionals are choosing Interim work as a strategic career move. And more organisations are embracing on-demand executive talent for competitive advantage. Both sides also recognise that businesses need more than permanent structures to be strong: they need agility. And this requires leaders who can adapt, execute and exit with equal precision.

## Interim Executive trends

- 1 The rise of strategic Interim leadership**  
– beyond crisis management to business transformation
- 2 The emergence of executives with self-agency**  
– self-directed leaders driving outcomes, not just processes
- 3 AI as a leadership amplifier**  
– automation enhancing rather than replacing executive judgement
- 4 The longevity advantage**  
– extended careers with exceptional leadership depth
- 5 Leadership redefined for digital-first organisations**  
– human-centric skills matched with native digital capabilities to lead technologically-enhanced organisations

Watermark Search International has witnessed and helped shape this market evolution for more than 15 years, ever since launching our Interim Executive practice in 2009. Our seven dedicated partners and a highly engaged support team have built the largest practice of its kind in Australia. Equally important, through thousands of successful placements, we've built a thriving network of Interim professionals strengthened by genuine partnerships with our clients. These relationships deepen our understanding of a market that is mature and ready for its next chapter.

So this year, with longitudinal analysis spanning 15 years, we are making some bold predictions about the next 15.

The year-on-year data from our survey highlights we are living and working longer, while adapting to social, commercial and technological change. Now we must also navigate evolving workplace expectations, geopolitical turbulence and rapidly advancing technologies, such as AI.

We believe these challenges present extraordinary opportunities for organisations and executives who can navigate complexity with confidence. The ability to discern, prioritise and strategically respond to these shifts will shape the future of leadership and organisational success in 2025 and beyond.

It is always a privilege to survey the market and we trust the insights in this year's report inspire bold leadership decisions in the year ahead.

# Survey highlights

## 1.

### The rise of strategic Interim leadership

#### Business stewardship



**31%** of Interim Executives say business transformation is the main reason for their current assignment

**24%** of Interim engagements are focused on finance



**20%** of Interim engagements are Chief Operating Officers

#### C-suite

90%

of Interim assignments are C-suite roles

26%



of Interim assignments are CEO roles

#### Value

23% of Interim Executives now earn \$2000+/day (up from 0% in 2011), reflecting the premium value of strategic expertise



#### Gender

33% of today's Interim Executives are women, nearly double the 19% representation in 2011, with equality projected by 2040



19%

2011

33%

2025

## 2.

### The emergence of executives with self-agency

#### Interim by choice

64%



of executives in 2025 work in Interim capacities (up from 50% in 2024), signalling a career model shift

58%



of executives prefer portfolio careers as their optimal work arrangement

#### Value propositions

76%

76% of executives emphasise the need to define clear value propositions and self-agency has become the top factor for success

## 3.

### AI as a leadership amplifier

#### Adoption by Interim Executives



90%

are using AI tools

61%

are learning about AI through formal education programs

#### Strategic advantage



67%

believe AI will significantly influence business strategy in the next 12 months

#### Adoption by organisations

only 3% of respondents reported that organisations have not *extensively* adopted AI, representing a steep learning curve for their workforces - and massive opportunities for AI-savvy leaders

3%



# Survey highlights cont.

## 4.

### The longevity advantage

#### Beyond 60

33% of today's Interim Executives are aged 60+, nearly double the 17% representation in 2011, reflecting extended career spans and delayed retirement



17%

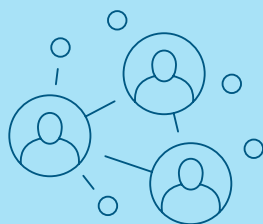
2011

33%

2025

#### Networking

74%



of today's Interim Executives prioritise networking as their biggest career sustainability strategy, with relationship-building trumping technical skills

#### Contribution to world economy

34% of global GDP in 2020 was **attributable to professionals aged 50+**, who contributed **US\$45 trillion** in value across the world – and this contribution continues to rise



Source: [Global Longevity Economy Outlook](#), AARP 2020

## 5. Leadership redefined for digital-first organisations

### Human-centric skills

64%

of survey participants rate stakeholder engagement as a vital leadership skill

53%

of participants say leadership is the top skill gap for the next 12-18 months

38%

of survey participants rate problem solving as the next most important leadership skill



Emotional intelligence, agility and adaptability all rate equal third most important





Traditional command-and-control models are being replaced by coaching and mentoring approaches

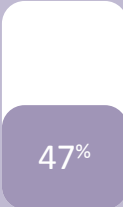




# 10 predictions for the Interim Executive market 2026–2040



## Market evolution

- 1 Gender representation could reach parity (50%) by 2040 
- 2 AI and other digital tools could help reduce bias in hiring and promotion. 
- 3 The 60+ age cohort will become the second-largest segment after 50-59 year-olds
- 4 >70% of Interim Executives will be "very committed to interim as career choice"

## Technology integration

- 5 AI adoption will accelerate from initial stages (47% in 2025) to mainstream integration across all business functions   
47%
- 6 Digital literacy will become a baseline requirement, not a differentiator 
- 7 Human-AI collaboration will define executive effectiveness 

## Organisational adaptation

- 8 Flexible work models will evolve beyond hybrid to fully agile, outcome-based structures 
- 9 Purpose-driven engagement will replace traditional employment value propositions 
- 10 Interim Executives will become one of the top choices for organisations seeking specialised C-suite expertise 

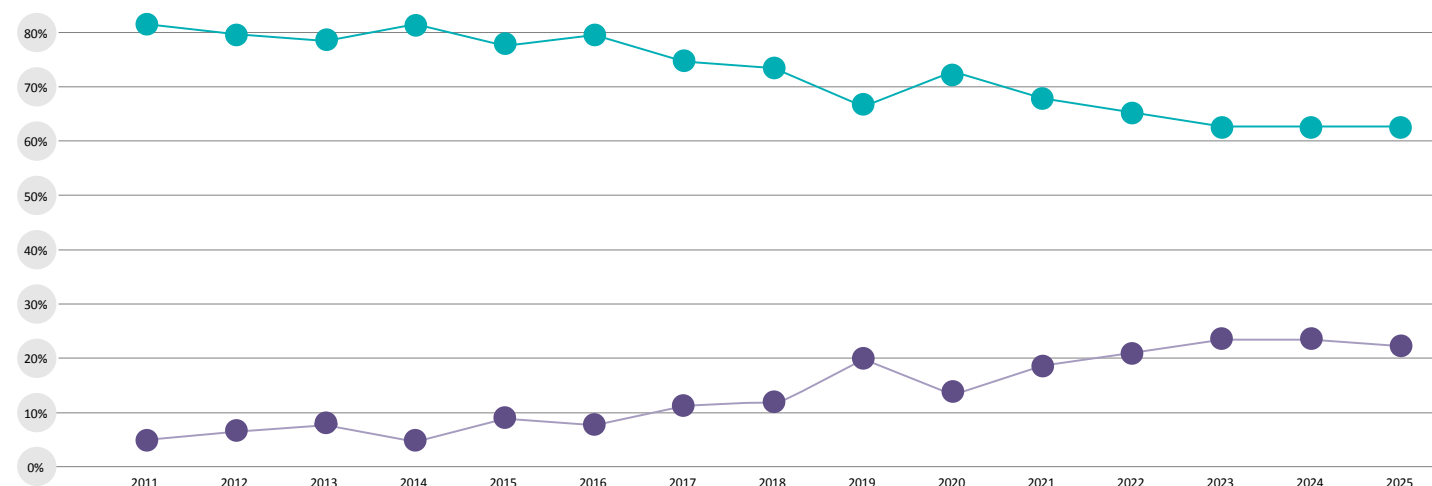
# Market evolution: 15 years of transformation

# Trend 1: Gender balance on the horizon

Our survey data and supporting research indicate a continued trend toward gender diversity and inclusion in leadership roles.

As organisations and governments double down on equality initiatives, the representation of women in Interim Executive positions is set to rise – driven by both social progress and proven business performance benefits.

## Gender distribution over years



## Gender representation

### This shift reflects:

- Corporate policies promoting gender equity
- Evolving societal norms encouraging women in leadership
- A broader cultural push for diversity and inclusion.



**Dropped** from **81%** in 2011  
to **66%** in 2025



**Rose** from **19%** in 2011  
to **33%** in 2025

# Trend 1: Gender balance on the horizon cont.

## Predictions for 2026–2040

### Parity on the horizon

**Female representation** could reach **50% by 2040**, with male representation declining accordingly.

### Policy momentum

Expect stronger diversity initiatives including mentorships, flexible work and inclusive recruitment.

### Cultural evolution

Societal attitudes will continue to support women in executive roles.

### Tech as an enabler

AI and digital tools may help reduce bias in hiring and promotion.

## Research supporting these trends



[Women in the Workplace 2024](#) report by McKinsey & Company found companies with greater gender diversity are significantly more likely to outperform their competitors.



[Gender Diversity in the C-suite](#) report in February 2023 from the Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance shows adding women to the C-suite changes how companies think and innovate, driving better outcomes.

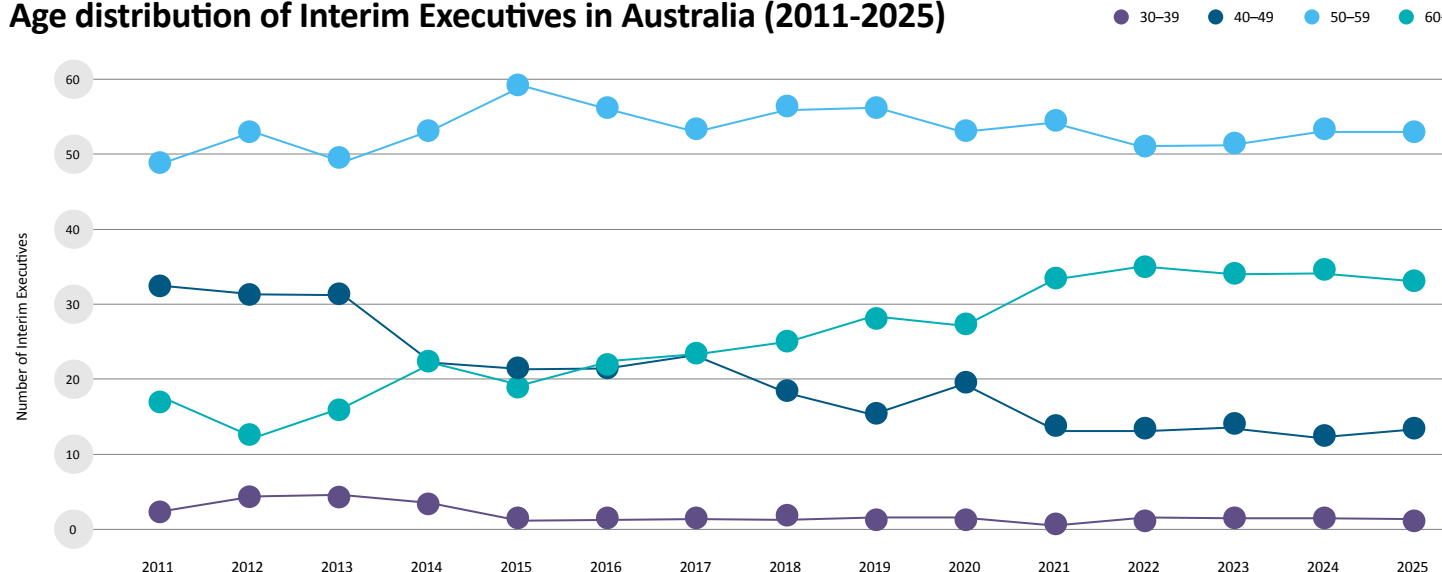


[Advancing Gender Equality in Executive Leadership](#) study published by MDPI in April 2025 emphasises the role of cultural norms and organisational policies in perpetuating or closing the gender gap. It highlights the importance of proactive initiatives to advance gender equality in executive leadership.

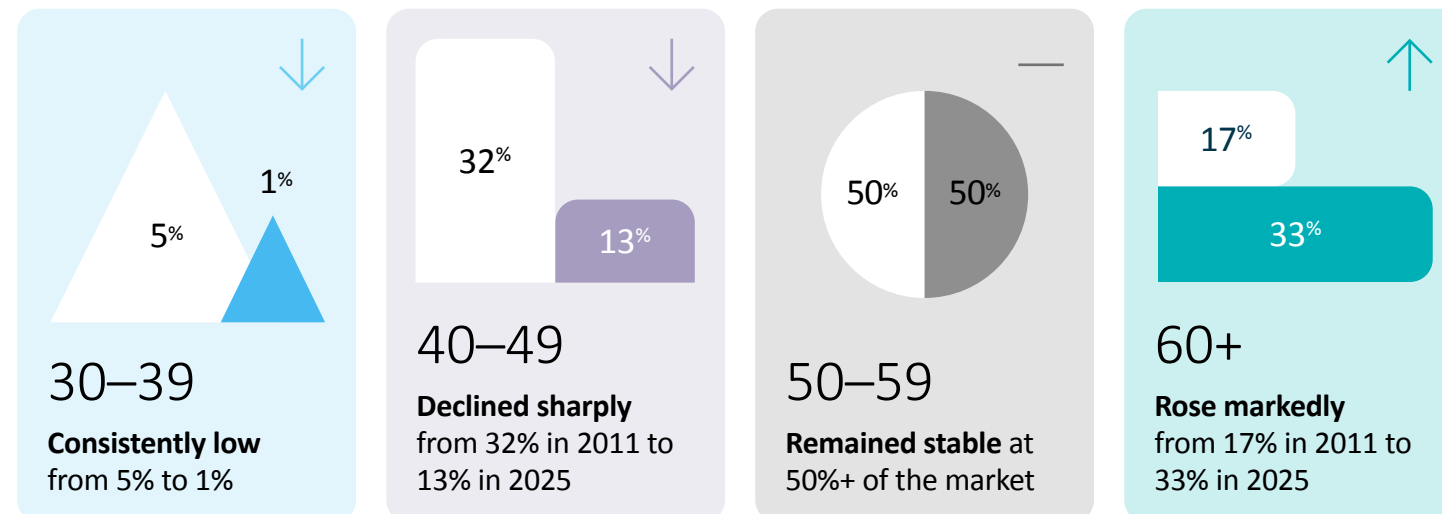
# Trend 2: Executives are becoming older, wiser

The age profile of Interim Executives is evolving, with older professionals leading the way.

## Age distribution of Interim Executives in Australia (2011-2025)



## Age representation



# Trend 2: Executives are becoming older, wiser cont.

## This shift reflects:

- Increased longevity and quality of life
- Delayed retirement and extended careers
- A growing preference for flexible work among experienced professionals
- Organisational recognition of the value older executives bring to leadership.

## Predictions for 2026–2040

30–39	Will remain a small segment
40–49	Expected to continue declining
50–59	Will remain the dominant group
60+	Will see the most growth, potentially becoming the second-largest cohort

## Research supporting these trends



[2024 Global Human Capital Trends](#) report by Deloitte highlights that organisations increasingly value experienced professionals for their ability to navigate complexity and drive strategic outcomes.



[Workforce of the future](#) report from PwC notes a rising trend of older professionals seeking flexible, purpose-driven roles – aligning with the growth in 60+ Interim Executives.



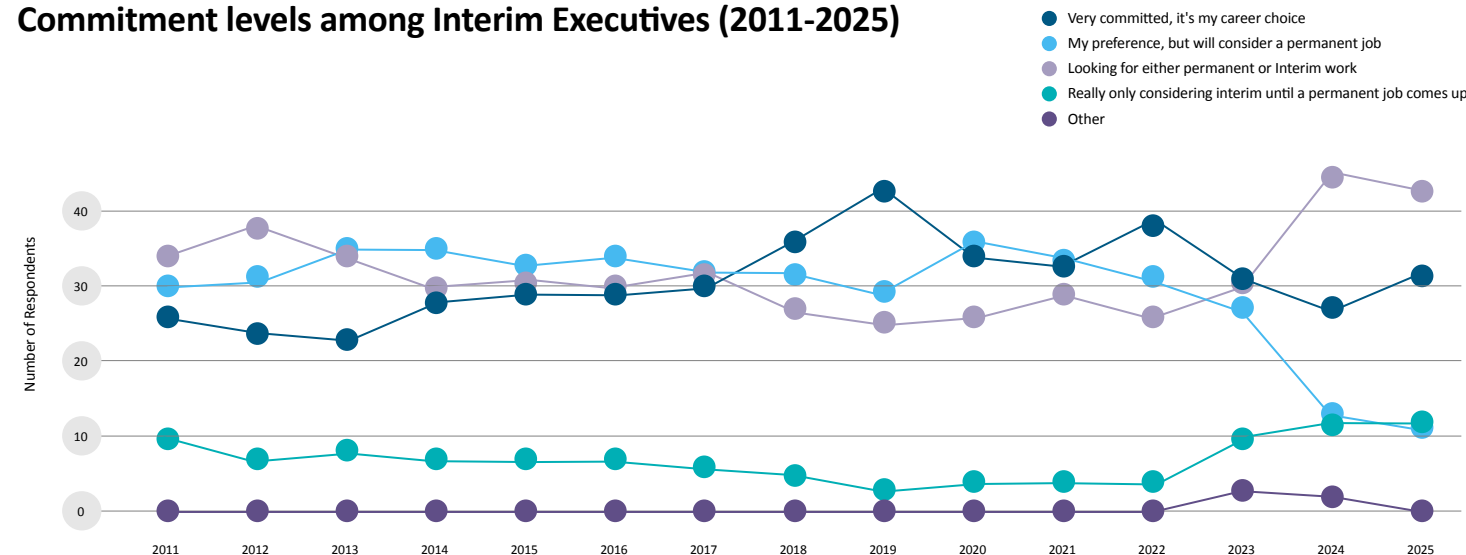
[Women in the Workplace 2024](#) report by McKinsey notes that as organisations prioritise diversity and inclusion the leadership pool is becoming both more experienced and more representative.



# Trend 3: From transitional to intentional careers

Over the past 15 years, Interim Executive work has shifted from a transitional option to a respected purpose-driven career path. Our data reveals a steady professionalisation of the role, with increasing numbers of executives committing to Interim as a long-term choice.

Commitment levels among Interim Executives (2011-2025)



## Commitment levels



**Very committed, it's my career choice"**

This level of commitment has grown steadily, peaking around 2019, reflecting rising confidence and identity in interim careers.



**My preference but will consider a permanent job"**

This level of commitment declined sharply post-2022, suggesting a stronger tilt toward interim-only preferences.



**Looking for either permanent or Interim work"**

This level of commitment has remained stable, with a recent uptick possibly driven by market uncertainty or evolving career strategies.



**Really only considering Interim until a permanent job comes up"**

This level of commitment has consistently remained low, with a slight increase in recent years.

# Trend 3: From transitional to intentional careers cont.

## This shift reflects:

- Financial policy and tax reforms including Superannuation Guarantee increases, Paid Parental Leave contributions and wage theft penalties.<sup>1</sup>
- Australia's relatively stable economy, despite global and local fluctuations.<sup>1</sup>
- Shifts in tariffs and international relations have indirectly driven demand for agile, experienced leadership.<sup>1</sup>
- Australians are living longer, healthier lives.<sup>2</sup>
- Growing cultural emphasis on work-life balance.<sup>2</sup>



## Predictions for 2026–2040

### Deepening commitment

More executives will view interim roles as a long-term, professional career path

### Decline in dual interest

Fewer executives will straddle interim and permanent roles, signalling a clearer identity shift toward interim-only careers

### Stable use of Interim as a stop-gap

The proportion using interim roles as a short-term bridge is expected to remain steady

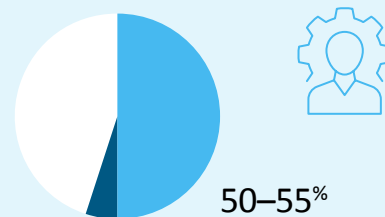
<sup>1</sup> Navigating 2025: Australia's Economic and Political Landscape, Wis Australia, January 2025

<sup>2</sup> The Megatrends that will impact Australia in the next 10-20 years, CSIRO, July 2021

# Trend 4: C-suite specialisation dominance

Over the past 15 years, the Interim Executive landscape has shifted decisively toward C-suite and strategic positions, reflecting broader shifts in organisational needs and leadership expectations.

## Interim roles



### General Manager/ Head of Department

Stable at 50-55%

17%

64%

### Other C-suite (COO, CFO, CHRO)

Surged from 17% (2012) to  
64% (2025)

13%

26%

### CEO

Doubled from 13% to 26%

0-20%

### Board Director

Sporadic but stable since rising  
from 0% to 20% post-2016

10-  
20%

### Project/Program Manager and Technical Functional Specialist

Moderate and steady at 10-20%

# Trend 4: C-suite specialisation dominance cont.

## This shift reflects:

- Sustained demand for versatile, strategic leadership at the GM and Head of Department levels
- Increased demand for C-suite leaders with expertise in finance, operations and transformation
- Growing need for Interim CEOs who bring visionary leadership during periods of change
- Though these roles remain niche, there is stable demand for Board Directors, especially in governance-heavy sectors



## Predictions for 2026–2040

**General Manager / Head of Department / Executive Director roles** will **stabilise** at **50–55%**, remaining critical for strategic execution and cross-functional leadership.

**Other C-suite roles (COO, CFO, CHRO, etc.)** will **rise** to **70–75%** by 2040, driven by economic uncertainty, regulatory complexity and the need for deep functional expertise.







**CEO roles** will **grow moderately** to **30–35%**, as organisations seek transformational leaders to navigate global and technological challenges.

**Board Director roles** may **stabilise** at **10–15%**, reflecting increased focus on governance, ESG and strategic oversight.

**Project/Program Manager and Technical/Functional Specialist roles** will **be steady** at **10–20%**, as demand for project-based and technical leadership remains consistent.



# Interim Executive market trends: 2011–2025 vs 2026–2040

Theme	2011–2025 (past 15 Years)	2026–2040 (next 15 Years)
Day rates	<div>  Decline in lower bands  "\$2000+" band rose from 0 to 23 </div>	<div>  Continued rise in top-tier rates  Demand for strategic, high-impact leadership </div>
Sectors	<div>  Healthcare (+8) and Education (+5) lead growth  Industrials and Property (+2) </div>	<div>  Sustainability drives Energy and Utilities  Growth in Property, Aged Care and Education </div>
Reasons for hire	<div>  "Gap fill" up +14  "Specialist skills" down -15  Change Management up +3 </div>	<div>  "Continuity" and "Transformation" dominate  Less reliance on niche external expertise </div>
How assignments are sourced	<div>  Face-to-face networking up +25  Online networking up +21  Job boards and prior contacts up +17 </div>	<div>  Hybrid networking is key  Strong personal brand and digital presence essential </div>
Why Interim is chosen	<div>  "Variety", "Challenge" and "Flexibility" remain top drivers  Financial reward motive stays low </div>	<div>  Interim seen as deliberate, long-term career  Purpose-driven leadership in high demand </div>

# The new leadership blueprint

The nature of leadership is profoundly changing, driven by rapid technological advances, shifting workforce dynamics and increasingly complex global challenges.

Our survey results highlight how traditional hierarchical, command-and-control models are giving way to new leadership styles that focus on coaching and collaboration, and prioritise human connection, inclusivity, adaptability and emotional intelligence. The importance of developing critical leadership capabilities cannot be overstated.



### Skills organisations need

Top skills organisations need to access in the next 12-18 months:



Leadership



Cyber security



AI/digital

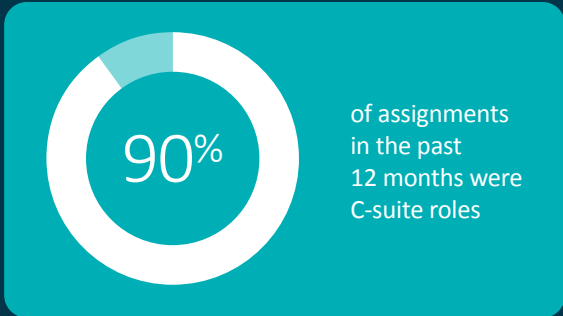


Data analytics



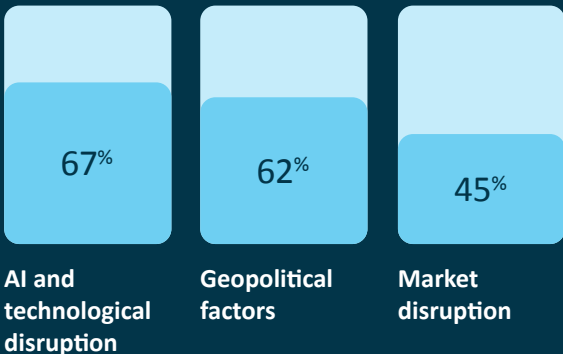
Risk management

These skills have been consistently in-demand each year, highlighting ongoing demand for these critical capabilities. By addressing these skills gaps, Interim Executives can ensure their clients are well-equipped to meet future challenges and opportunities.



### Leadership in an age of disruption

Biggest disruptors to business strategy over the next 12 months:



To navigate these challenges, leaders will need to adapt, learn and reskill. Key traits for effective adaptation include technological proficiency, strategic foresight, resilience and agility.

### From manager to mentor

The need for traditional managers is diminishing. AI can free up to 50% of managers' time from routine administrative tasks, allowing them to focus on talent development and strategic priorities.

Over the past several years, our survey has highlighted a significant shift towards a more adaptive and agile leadership style. The three most important leadership skills Interim Executives bring to organisations are:



Stakeholder engagement



Strategic thinking

Problem-solving / Adaptability / Emotional intelligence all rated equal third most important

These skills underscore the multifaceted nature of effective leadership, emphasising the ability to navigate complex environments, foster strong relationships and drive impactful solutions.



Mentoring is a priority for me on any assignment. Not to be perceived as a threat but as a person who will move the organisation to a better place, enabling people to thrive after the assignment period.”

Comment on mentoring from a survey participant

## From commander to coach

Gone are the days of command-and-control leadership. Today's employees value autonomy and trust. Managers who act as mentors, not taskmasters, can help boost employee engagement and create a healthy atmosphere.

With AI handling many managerial tasks going forward, the role of leaders has transformed. They are now essential for embodying human-centric principles such as mentoring, guiding and decision-making.

Interim Executives who are adopting this mentor/coach style say they are **moving away from role-based to skills-based approaches**. Their focus on **skills development is shifting from functional to human skills** like critical thinking, vision, mentorship, guidance and stakeholder engagement.

## 10 essential future leadership skills

- 1 Human-centric:** prioritising empathy, emotional intelligence and team well-being
- 2 Principles-led:** guiding actions and decisions based on core values and ethical considerations
- 3 Generalist skill set:** having broad skills to navigate diverse challenges and opportunities
- 4 Strategic vision:** encompassing multiple functions and decentralised teams
- 5 Coaching and mentoring:** enhancing engagement and performance, rather than directing
- 6 Adaptability and continuous learning:** developing new knowledge and approaches to navigate rapid technological, workplace and market changes
- 7 Inclusiveness:** valuing diverse perspectives and encouraging collaborative decision-making
- 8 Digital literacy:** keeping pace with technological advancements
- 9 Growth mindset:** committing to continuous improvement and innovation
- 10 AI integration:** investing in reskilling programs to help teams leverage AI as a strategic multiplier



# Future work models

# Traditional work models defined by fixed roles and physical offices are dissolving into more flexible, outcome-focused arrangements.

The workplace is evolving into a dynamic ecosystem blending physical, digital and hybrid environments to support collaboration and innovation. Routine tasks are increasingly automated, while strategic and innovation-driven roles dominate.

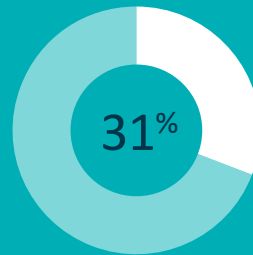
Looking ahead, the future of work – especially in the Interim Executive market – will be shaped by digital platforms, AI augmentation and purpose-driven careers.

64%

of executives now work in Interim capacities (up from 50% in 2024)

58%

prefer portfolio careers as their optimal work arrangement



Nearly one-third of Interim roles focus specifically on transformation initiatives



Creating stability for agility – how do I provide stability for my workers while creating the agility my business needs to thrive?”

Comment on agility from a survey participant

## The future workplace is agile, inclusive and innovative

Deloitte’s *2025 Human Capital Trends* report underscores the need for organisations to balance stability with agility, reinforcing the shift toward dynamic, hybrid ecosystems that support inclusion and innovation. To remain competitive, organisations must align internal structures and culture with new leadership models.

Watermark’s survey highlights the importance of fostering belonging, where employees feel valued and supported. DEI is essential for attracting top talent and driving innovation. MIT’s *Guiding Decentralized Decision-Making by Acting on Purpose* 2023 briefing noted that inclusive organisations where teams are empowered by purpose and decentralised decision-making outperform their competitors. Interim executives thrive in these agile settings, often leading transformation in complex environments.

## Organisational improvements

Our 2025 survey identified several areas for workplace improvement. Based on these findings, we recommend the following strategies to help organisations prepare their workplaces and teams for future success:

### Flexible work models:

hybrid, part-time and phased retirement options support engagement and retention.

### Inclusive culture and leadership:

emphasising age diversity, lived experience and mutual respect fosters innovation.

### Lifelong learning and career mobility:

micro-credentials, reskilling and mentoring build inclusive leadership.

### Wellbeing and connection:

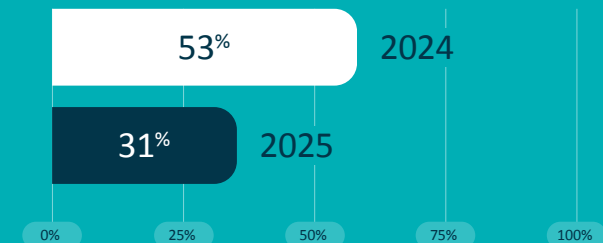
tailored wellbeing strategies and transparent communication strengthen cohesion.

### Agile innovation and AI integration:

empowered teams and embedded AI tools drive efficiency and responsiveness.

## Importance of hybrid work

In 2025, hybrid work remains relevant but has declined in perceived importance signalling it has become a baseline expectation.



# Self-agency as a foundation of success

Self-agency is the ability to make decisions and take actions that align with your personal goals and interests. It's about being the architect of your professional life rather than passively reacting to circumstances.

When people embrace self-agency, they change from being passengers to pilots in their careers, steering their paths toward fulfillment and success. This change in thinking about how you engage with work is a common motivator for a transition to a portfolio career – which can happen at any stage, rather than any set age – allowing you to shape your professional journey in a way that reflects your values, aspirations and purpose.

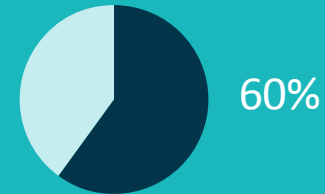
This is where the concept of self-agency comes into play – a principle that emphasizes autonomy, proactive decision-making, and personal accountability. With self-agency, you don't just survive in the workplace; you thrive, creating a portfolio career that is uniquely yours.



## The importance of self-agency in a successful portfolio career

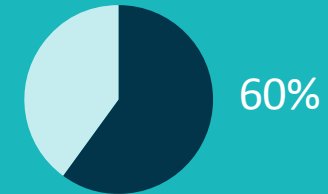
In 2025 we are seeing a 25% increase in executives moving from permanent to Interim work, signalling a restructuring of career expectations. This shift is driven by three primary motivations:

### 1 Flexibility and autonomy



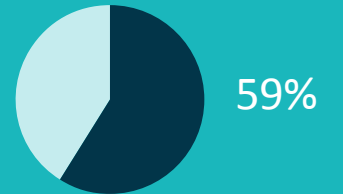
the ability to choose assignments, set boundaries and maintain work-life balance

### 2 Variety and challenge



exposure to diverse industries, problems and organisational contexts

### 3 Impact delivery



the opportunity to drive meaningful change and see tangible results

## Challenges for Interim Executives

42%

Unstable workflow and income

29%

Not being comfortable with self-promotion

**Network dependency:** The critical importance of maintaining professional relationships



## Strategies for sustainable self-agency in an Interim Executive career

### 1 Strategic networking



74%, up 9% from 2024

Professional relationships remain the foundation of interim success, with three quarters of assignments sourced through existing contacts. Face-to-face networking continues to be most effective (50%), though online networking now accounts for 25% of opportunities.

### 2 Consistent value delivery



69%

Building reputation through exceptional performance on every assignment creates compound returns through referrals and repeat engagements. This approach transforms individual projects into long-term relationship investments.

### 3 Continuous skill development



41%

Staying current with industry trends, technological advances, and emerging best practices ensures ongoing relevance and premium positioning in competitive markets.

## Goal setting

Only you know what your ideal version of a portfolio career looks like. You are the one who needs to own accountability, so to take control effectively, focus on the following:



**Craft a clear, compelling message:** clearly communicate your strengths and unique value



**Stay ahead of industry trends:** keep your skills and knowledge updated



**Proactively manage your career:** seek growth opportunities and pursue continuous learning



**Set clear goals and boundaries:** define your ideal projects, workload, and availability



**Engage your network:** identify advocates and key decision-makers who influence hiring



**Diversify your channels to market:** work with brokers, alliances, champions and past co-workers



**Align your work with your values:** ensure your career reflects what matters most to you



**Take full accountability:** your success depends on the actions you take

# Longevity: redefining career spans

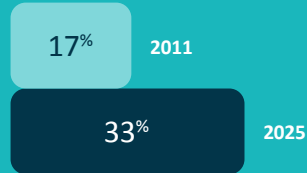
Longevity in the workforce continues to evolve beyond traditional definitions of age or tenure. It now encompasses economic resilience, emotional wellbeing and career adaptability.

Australia's Interim Executive market reflects broader demographic trends: as we're living longer, healthier lives, delaying retirement is an attractive choice.

The financial upsides of ongoing earnings, particularly at executive rates, and improved superannuation policies helping retirement nest-eggs grow are very clear. Though money isn't the only motivator. Interim Executives are redefining what it means to have a sustainable, fulfilling career – one that aligns with personal values, delivers impact and evolves with changing market demands.

17% (2011) to 33% (2025) are **60+**

The 60+ demographic among Interim Executives working past the traditional retirement age has doubled over the last 15 years



**23%** prioritise health and wellbeing

Nearly a quarter of Interim Executives treat their physical and mental health as essential assets, nurturing them with regular exercise and a balanced diet



**26%** prioritise work-life balance

Interim Executives are deliberating managing work-life boundaries to avoid burnout



## Meaningful work

Executives are increasingly seeking cultural fit and meaningful work aligned with personal values, prioritising purpose over contract type or duration. In turn, organisations that recognise this driver gain the strategic insight and crisis management capabilities brought by experienced leaders.

Mentorship remains strong as organisations try to address the challenges and opportunities of a multigenerational workforce, now spanning up to five generations. Reverse mentoring is gaining traction as a tool to bridge generational knowledge gaps, with the added benefit of strengthening working relationships.



I think it starts with a leadership mindset that sees the benefit and value that a multigenerational workforce brings.”

Comment on mentoring from a survey participant



Unfortunately, there is a lack of innovative thought leadership in this area across many organisations. Embracing a mature workforce for very specific outcomes on specific parcels of work leveraging experience and capability is an innovative practice in itself that few organisations have adopted, but it does appear mindsets are changing.”

Comment on longevity from a survey respondent

## Organisational shifts to embrace longevity

The subject of longevity elicits some of the largest responses in Watermark’s annual Interim Executive survey. While it is clear some organisations are supporting career longevity well, there is still work to be done in many areas. Based on our survey findings, the five most popular ways organisations can support career longevity are:



### 1 Flexible work models

Offer part-time, project-based and remote options to accommodate diverse life stages and responsibilities.

Enable phased retirement and return-to-work pathways for experienced professionals.

### 2 Lifelong learning ecosystems

Invest in continuous upskilling and cross-generational knowledge sharing.

Promote reverse mentoring to bridge digital fluency and institutional wisdom.

### 3 Health and wellbeing strategies

Provide comprehensive health benefits, mental health support and wellness programs tailored to all age groups.

Recognise that wellbeing drives performance and retention.

### 4 Bias-free talent practices

Audit recruitment and promotion processes to eliminate age bias.

Celebrate the value of experience, not just youth or novelty.

### 5 Purpose and culture alignment

Foster cultures where values-driven leadership is recognised and rewarded.

Create roles that offer meaning, autonomy and impact, especially for seasoned professionals.



# Artificial Intelligence

# AI's ability to analyse vast amounts of data, automate routine tasks and provide predictive insights is revolutionising the way executives operate.

By leveraging AI, interim Executives can make more informed decisions, identify emerging trends and implement strategies that drive organisational success. The integration of AI into executive roles is not just about adopting new technologies; it is about reimagining leadership and embracing a future where human intelligence and artificial intelligence collaborate seamlessly.



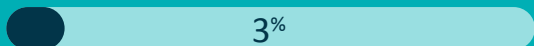
Generative AI can bolster innovation, productivity and outcomes while making work easier for people. For business leaders, globally, the challenge is two-fold: understanding the possibilities and risks Generative AI brings and preparing for the inevitable organisational change headed their way.”

*2025 Global Human Capital Trends*  
Deloitte Insights

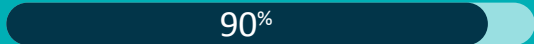
## AI as a leadership amplifier, not replacement

Our 2025 survey respondents noted a large AI adoption gap between most of the organisations they are working with and their own efforts to get up to speed. This represents a massive competitive advantage for Interim Executives who can demonstrate AI fluency while helping organisations navigate digital transformation.

### AI adoption



**of organisations** only 3% of respondents reported that organisations have extensively adopted AI, representing a steep learning curve for their workforces – and massive opportunities for AI-savvy leaders



**of Interim Executives** 90% predict AI and automation will be common decision-making collaborators

### Top AI skills

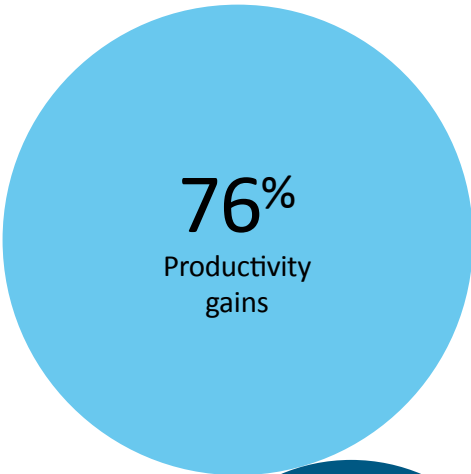
66%  
use LLMs

Two thirds of Interim Executives say they are adept at using Large Language Models

52%  
leverage AI insights

Half of Interim Executives say they use AI for data analysis to help them make informed decisions

## Main uses of AI among Interim Executives



56%  
Operational efficiency



38%  
Customer experience

“Almost all companies invest in AI, but just 1 per cent believe they are at maturity. Our research finds the biggest barrier to scaling is not employees – who are ready – but leaders, who are not steering fast enough ... AI could drive enormous positive and disruptive change. This transformation will take some time, but leaders must not be dissuaded. Instead, they must advance boldly today to avoid becoming uncompetitive tomorrow.”

AI in the workplace: A report for 2025  
McKinsey

Interim Executives are enthusiastically learning about AI

The commitment to AI education among Interim Executives demonstrates strategic foresight and reflects their common view that AI mastery will become a baseline leadership requirement.

- 61% are actively educating themselves through formal online courses and certification programs
- 12% are not pursuing AI education
- 88% are engaged in some form of AI learning, from formal education to research and practical experimentation.

Interim Executives’ enthusiasm for developing AI skills is supported by *AI in the workplace*, a 2025 report from McKinsey, which suggests corporate use of AI could add US\$4.4 billion in productivity growth in the long-term. However, short-term returns are unclear.

Digital literacy as executive currency

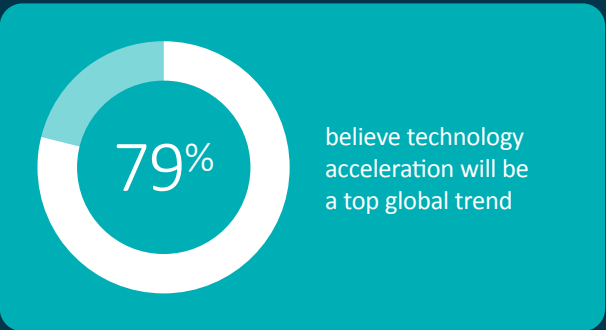
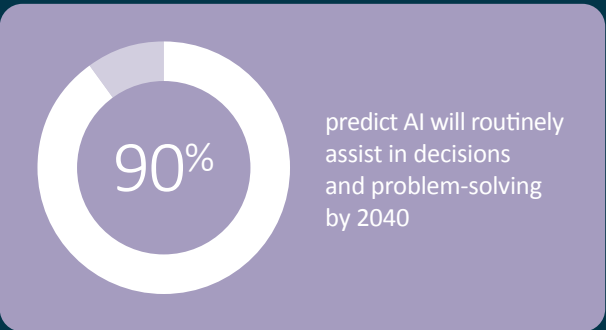
Interim Executives recognise digital literacy is now essential for effective leadership. The key areas of technological competency they’ve identified include:

- AI tools: understanding capabilities and limitations of AI systems
- Data analytics: interpreting and acting on data-driven insights
- Digital platforms: Effectively using collaboration and productivity technologies
- Cybersecurity: understanding risks and governance requirements
- Technology strategy: aligning digital capabilities with business objectives



Future trends and predictions

Looking ahead 15 years, Interim Executives anticipate the organisations they work with will be profoundly transformed by AI and connected technologies. They believe AI will soon be embedded in all decision-making processes, rather than used in standalone tools, and human-AI collaboration will become the standard leadership operating model.



## The human-AI leadership partnership

The future of executive leadership lies not in human replacement by AI, but in sophisticated collaboration between human judgment and artificial intelligence capabilities.

Reid Hoffman, LinkedIn's founder, emphasises the importance of mastering skills that AI cannot replicate, including:

1 Emotional intelligence

2 Ethical discernment

3 Creative expression

4 Intention



People with the capacity to form intentions and set goals will emerge as winners in an AI-mediated world ... The uncertainty of professional life in an era of accelerating automation and the dawn of AI agents shows that personal relationships have never been more valuable. Human referrals and trust can't scale like AI, so your personal network becomes more valuable than ever. So become AI fluent but focus on people. Foster even more relationships."

**Reid Hoffman, in an op-ed article for *The San Francisco Standard*, 15 June 2025**



# Strategic recommendations for the C-suite

Rapid changes in demographics, technology and workforce expectations are converging, pushing organisations to rethink how they find and place executive talent. Drawing on 15 years of insights and forecasts for the evolving Interim Executive market, Watermark offers six strategic recommendations to guide this shift.

## 1. Embrace Interim-first leadership

### Current reality

90% of interim assignments are now C-suite roles, with transformation work accounting for 31% of engagements. Organisations continuing to view Interim Executives as just temporary solutions are missing strategic opportunities.

### Strategic response:

Develop Interim Executive relationships as strategic partnerships rather than transactional engagements

Create "interim-friendly" onboarding processes that accelerate value delivery

Establish frameworks for converting successful interim engagements into ongoing advisory relationships

Build internal capabilities to effectively manage and integrate Interim Executive talent

## 2. Accelerate AI integration through Interim leadership

### Current reality

90% of Interim Executives actively use AI tools. This represents a critical organisational capability gap they can bridge.

### Strategic response:

Leverage AI-fluent Interim Executives to lead digital transformation initiatives

Create AI adoption roadmaps that combine technological implementation with change management

Invest in executive AI education programs to build internal capabilities

Establish governance frameworks for ethical AI use in executive decision-making

## 3. Design age-inclusive leadership practices

### Current reality

33% of executives are age 60+ – double their representation 15 years ago – yet many organisations maintain unconscious age bias in leadership selection and development.

### Strategic response:

Audit recruitment and promotion processes to eliminate age discrimination

Create flexible engagement models that accommodate diverse life stages and preferences

Establish reverse mentoring programs to bridge generational knowledge gaps

Recognise and reward the strategic value of experienced leadership in crisis management and transformation

## 4. Build purpose-driven engagement models

### Current reality

43% of executives prioritise meaningful work over employment structure, with values alignment becoming a leading reason to work with an organisation.

### Strategic response:

Articulate clear organisational purpose and impact metrics for executive roles

Create mission-driven project opportunities that attract top interim talent

Establish recognition programs that celebrate purpose-driven leadership achievements

## 5. Develop hybrid talent acquisition strategies

### Current reality

Interim solutions are often overshadowed by traditional talent strategies such as internal skill-building (43%), permanent hiring (43%) and redeployment (40%).

### Strategic response:

Create integrated talent strategies that seamlessly blend permanent, interim and contract resources

Develop talent portfolio approaches that match engagement models to specific business needs

Build relationships with Interim Executive networks before critical needs arise

Establish clear criteria for when interim vs. permanent leadership is most appropriate

## 6. Foster human-centric AI leadership development

### Current reality

53% of organisations identify leadership as their top skill gap, while traditional command-and-control models are being replaced by coaching and mentoring approaches.

### Strategic response:

Invest in leadership development programs that emphasise emotional intelligence and stakeholder engagement

Deliver AI-human collaboration training for senior executives

Establish mentoring and coaching capabilities as core leadership competencies

Develop assessment tools that measure human-centric leadership effectiveness



# The Interim Executive avatars of 2025: Ingrid & Eric

# Ingrid & Eric

Our Interim Executive avatars of 2025, Ingrid and Eric, have continued to refine their unique value propositions and amplified their focus on networking. This strategic approach has shortened the gap between assignments and led to an uplift in their daily rates.



However, uncertainty and consistency of work remain significant challenges for both in maintaining a portfolio career. Key considerations for accepting work include purposefulness, alignment with their values and flexibility, regardless of whether the engagement is Interim or permanent.

Ingrid and Eric, like their predecessors, are self-directed, lifelong learners. They remain attuned to staying relevant and sustaining longevity in the workplace. As they prepare themselves for the workplace of 2040, they will continue to foster their growth mindset and strive to expand their digital literacy.

This year, Ingrid and Eric have embraced AI, rating their current level of knowledge as growing. AI tools such as Large Language Models (i.e. ChatGPT & CoPilot) and Data Analytics have become integral to their roles, allowing them to automate routine tasks, streamline operations and focus on strategic decision-making. They are self-motivated to upskill in new AI tools by enrolling in online courses and attending AI focused conferences.

They are committed to maintaining strong professional networks, selecting assignments aligned with their unique value propositions and staying on top of industry trends. Mentoring has seen a significant uplift as a learning method, including peer mentoring, industry networks and reverse mentoring from younger workers.

Ingrid and Eric predict the in-demand roles for 2026 will be Chief Financial Officers and Chief Transformation Officers and the high-demand key skills will be executive leadership and cybersecurity. In the workplace, they predict a shift in focus from hybrid work and flexibility (now mainstream) to attraction and retention strategies for mature workers, along with embedding lifelong learning and reskilling as role requirements shift.

# Ingrid



Age	55.5	Sectors most used by	Healthcare Aged Care Not-for-profit
Day rates	22% – \$1500-\$1800/day 20% – \$2000+/day	Main work source	82% – prior job contacts
Avg. weighted day rate	\$1740	Superpowers outside of functional expertise	Strategic thinking Trust-building Complex problem-solving
Preferred work type	Open to Interim and permanent roles; chooses Interim for flexibility and variety	Human skills	High EQ Stakeholder engagement Agility Creativity
Motivation for Interim work	Seeks work-life balance and continuous growth	AI tools most used	Large Language Models (ChatGPT, CoPilot) and Data Analytics to enhance decision-making and efficiency
Challenges of being an Interim Executive	Uncertainty of consistent work and income; business development efforts required to secure sustainable pipeline of work	Learning approach to staying AI-relevant	Online courses and AI conferences
Avg. gap between assignments	6.16 months	Prioritising digital literacy to get ready for workplaces of 2040	76% recommend <div><div></div></div>
Avg. assignment length	5.83 months	Focus areas to sustain longevity	Continuously developing skills Networking Maintaining work-life balance
Common roles	Chief People Officer Director of Transformation		
In demand roles for 2026	Chief Financial Officer Chief Transformation Officer		
Common functions	HR Program Management Marketing Customer Experience		

# Eric



Age	58.5	Sectors most used by	Healthcare Government Not-for-profit Financial Services
Day rates	25% – \$1500-\$1800/day 23% – \$2000+/day	Main work source	73% – prior job contacts
Avg. weighted day rate	\$1820	Superpowers outside of functional expertise	Strategic thinking Trust-building Complex problem-solving
Preferred work type	Open to Interim and permanent roles; enjoys Interim for challenge and flexibility	Human skills	High EQ Stakeholder engagement Agility Leadership
Motivation for Interim work	Focuses on adding commercial value and adapting to change	AI tools most used	Large Language Models (ChatGPT, CoPilot) and Data Analytics for, strategic insights and automation
Challenges of being an Interim Executive	Uncertainty of consistent work and income; business development efforts required to secure sustainable pipeline of work	Learning approach to staying AI-relevant	Online courses and AI conferences
Avg. gap between assignments	5.22 months	Prioritising digital literacy to get ready for workplaces of 2040	70% recommend 70%
Avg. assignment length	6.8 months	Focus areas to sustain longevity	Adapting to new technologies Networking Proactively seeking new opportunities
Common roles	Director of Transformation Chief Financial Officer		
In demand roles for 2026	Chief Financial Officer Chief Transformation Officer		
Common functions	Finance Program Management CEO		

# Survey results

Preferred way of working

In just 12 months, large numbers of executives have changed their approach to work, shifting from permanent roles to Interim, while fewer executives have sought hybrid work.

64% prefer Interim (↑ from 50% in 2024)

30% prefer hybrid (↓ from 53% in 2024)



Human skills important in an Interim Executive



Stakeholder engagement



Problem solving

EQ / Agility / Adaptability

equal third most important



Most recent day rate

Over the past 12 months day rates achieved by Interim Executives in the Australian market have remained consistent.

58% earning \$1300-\$2000

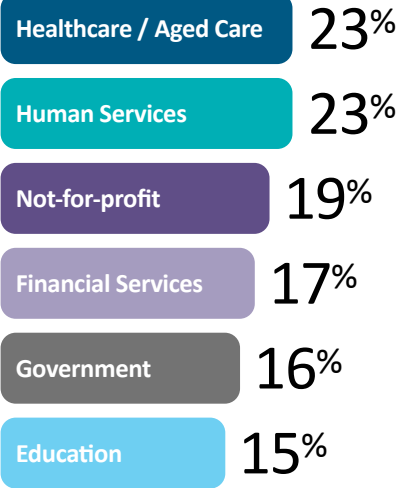


23% earning > \$2000



Average day rates sit between \$1500-\$1800

Top sectors worked



Duration on assignment

68% 1-11 months (↑ from 55% in 2024)



23% 12 months+ (↓ from 32% in 2024)



Underlying business reason for most recent assignment

We have seen an uptick in business turnaround (+6%) as an underlying business reason businesses bring in an Interim Executive, reflecting stronger focus on market conditions and business cost reduction / margin improvement.



Business turnaround



Functional transformation

Top levels worked

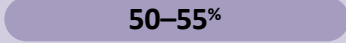
Most Interim Executives are filling CEO or other C-suite roles (90% combined).



Chief Executive Officer



other C-suite

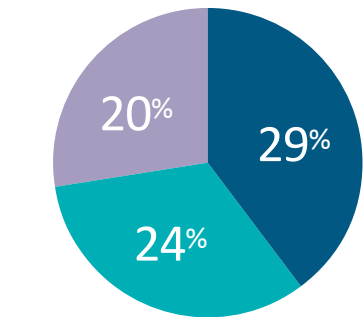


GM/Head of Department



Board Director

Top business functions performed in the last 12 months



Transformation  
Finance  
Chief Operating Officer

Functional roles expected to be in the most demand for Interim Executives



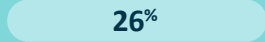
Chief Financial Officer



Chief Transformation Officer



Chief Operating Officer



Chief Executive Officer

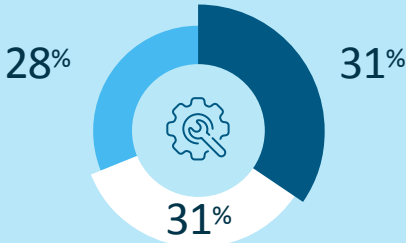


Chief People Officer / HR Executive



Main business reason for most recent assignment

We have seen a slight uptick of 5% with specialist skills being the key reason businesses bring in an Interim Executive.

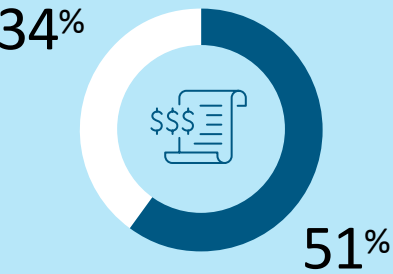


Business transformation  
Specialist skills  
Gap Filling

Hiring practices

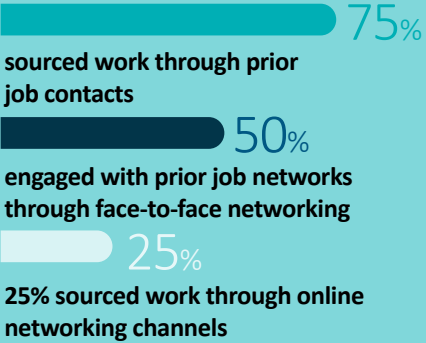
We have seen a +7% shift to fixed term contracts when organisations engage Interim Executives and a -5% shift away from day rate contracts.

51% Day rate  
34% Fixed term contract



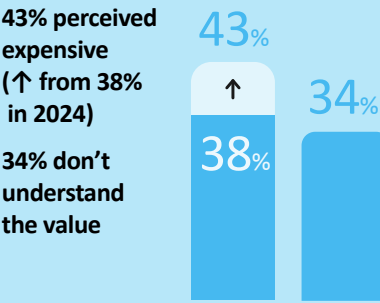
Sources of work

Many Interim Executives recommend staying in touch with ex-colleagues and participating in industry events as some of the best ways to build a sustainable portfolio career.



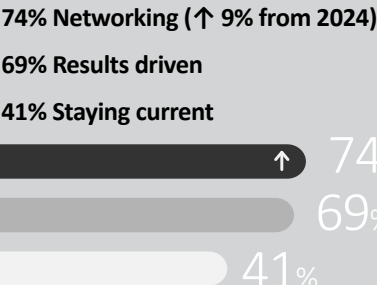
Barriers to engagement

The two main reasons organisations are deterred from engaging Interim Executives according to survey respondents are cost and a lack of understanding about the value an interim can bring.



Strategies for career longevity

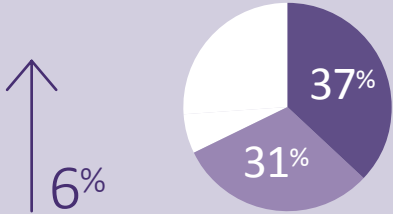
Letting your networks know the value you can add to their business challenges is the top strategy for achieving longevity in a portfolio career.



Where did you learn about Interim Executive?

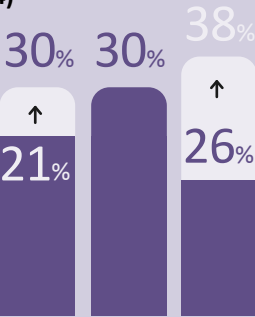
When people are ready for Interim, or “running towards this way of working”, they choose two main forms of research.

37% ask personal network  
31% do their own research (↑ 6% from 2024)

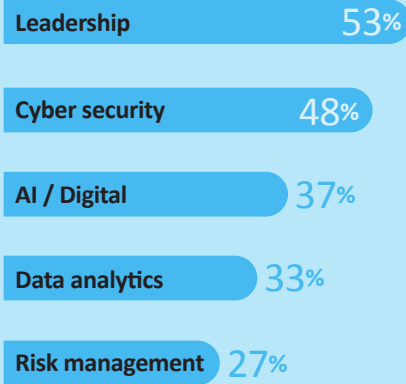


Time looking for an Interim Executive role

30% <1 month (↑ from 21% in 2024)  
30% 2-5 months (steady since 2024)  
38% >6 months (↑ from 26% in 2024)

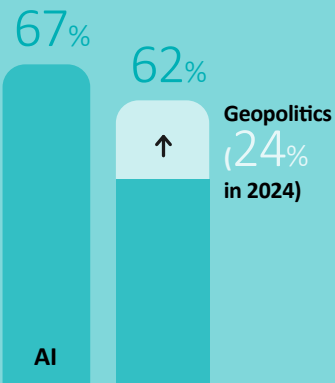


Business areas requiring urgent attention to address skills gaps



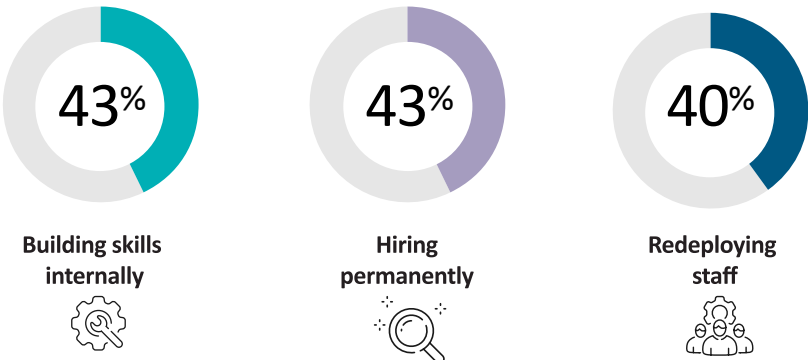
Topical issues of 2025

Interim Executives identify two standout issues will the most external business disruption in the year ahead.



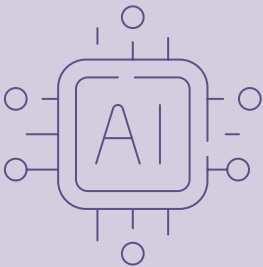
How organisations are addressing skills gaps

Organisations need to think creatively about how they solve talent challenges, rather than continuing to rely on traditional approaches. While organisations have chosen Interim engagements to fill skills gaps 1/3 of the time in the last 15 years, we haven't seen an upswing in recent years.



Commitment to developing AI skills

61% Taking AI courses (↑ from 48% in 2024)

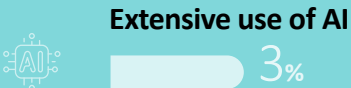


12% not doing anything to keep up (↓ from 21% in 2024)



AI adoption in organisations is growing, but needs to accelerate

Most Interim Executives say they are seeing small progress in organisations’ use of AI, but they believe most organisations are behind.



Top business areas using AI

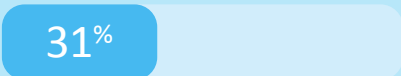
Market research generally supports these findings, with some variations in observed use of AI in other areas, such as Customer Service, HR and Supply Chain.



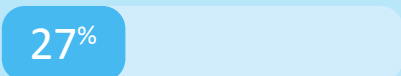
IT



Marketing



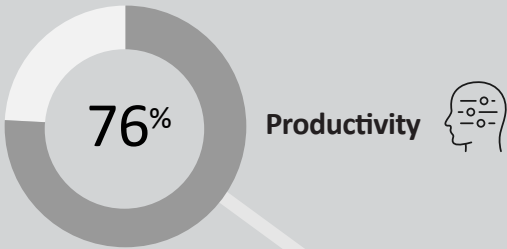
Operations



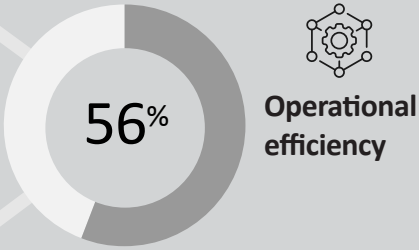
Finance



Key challenges organisations use AI to solve



Productivity



Operational efficiency



Data management



Customer experience



# About Watermark

# Watermark capabilities

## Executive Search

Founded in 1979, we are one of the longest established Australian executive search firms. Even though we are, above all else, an Australian based firm, we have an established track record in attracting and then securing overseas candidates. We have considerable expertise in senior executive appointments across a broad range of public and private sector organisations. Our firm has been built on a substantial body of work undertaken for publicly listed companies, private companies, professional services, state owned corporations, government agencies, departments and advisory boards.

## Interim Executive Search

We provide immediate and high-level specialist executives with the experience to bring stability to and provide guardianship for a company during a period of change, executive absence or performance turnaround. We also assist with providing executives who deliver on projects, programs or specialist reviews. When clients are ready to appoint an executive, we complete the assignment within one week.

## Board Appointments

We believe that strong boards make for better organisations and improved business performance. In conducting searches, we do not simply look for “a name” but rather search for candidates with the relevant skills to add real value to a board. We often start our board search by working with the client to produce a Board Skills Matrix, which then informs the specific brief. Our track record ensures familiarity with the specific, and often sensitive, challenges involved in appointing Non-Executive Directors and Chairs with the right skill, personal and cultural fit.

## Thought Leadership

As thought leaders, we undertake various pieces of research and market analysis to form our *Agile Leadership Lessons Podcast*, annual *Interim Executive Survey* and *Board Diversity Index*. To view our current reports please [click here](#).



# Interim partner team profiles



Caroline McAuliffe

Caroline is a co-founder of the Watermark Interim Executive practice, established in 2011. As a trusted advisor, she brings 20 years' experience in the Interim Executive field and has coached countless executives transitioning to portfolio careers. Caroline leads the Sydney team, successfully deploying numerous C-suite Interim Executives across diverse organisations and industry sectors and is dedicated to continuing to lead the way, setting new standards and driving innovation in the Interim Executive industry. Beyond her professional achievements, Caroline is a lifelong learner, avid reader and podcast enthusiast. She is committed to supporting her two grown-up children in their academic and life pursuits while actively maintaining her own fitness and health regimen, with a focus on longevity. Caroline co-authored the award-winning book *The Rise of the Interim Executive* ([www.theinterimexecutive.com.au](http://www.theinterimexecutive.com.au)) with Jacinta Whelan in 2021.



Jacinta Whelan

Jacinta, or Jac to the team, is an award-winning author and passionate advocate for the vision of Interim work in Australia. It's no surprise her peers describe her as a force of nature and a trailblazer. She's not just navigating the present; she's actively shaping what Interim can and will be. Based in Melbourne, Jacinta has spent more than 25 years dedicated to her passion for shaping the world of Interim Executives. Her journey has seen her setting up and leading Interim practices from bustling Hong Kong to the vibrant streets of New York, and finally back home. With a Bachelor of Business (BA Bus) under her belt, she's also a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD, 2008) and an alum of Harvard Business School (Class of 2018). Despite her global experiences, Jac remains a country girl at heart, bringing a grounded and authentic approach to her work and relationships. When not at work you will find Jac lost in a book or cheering her kids on from the sidelines ... or sometimes trying to do both at once.



Donna Burr

Donna is a trusted advisor to organisations navigating leadership transitions, with more than 25 years' experience across chartered accounting, HR business partnering and executive search. Known for her calm presence and sharp thinking, she connects the right Interim talent with the right challenge – fast. Donna partners with a dynamic community of Interim Executives who embrace portfolio careers and a more holistic approach to leadership that balances impact with wellbeing, purpose and personal growth. This shift mirrors her own journey, blending professional rigour with a passion for health, fitness and longevity. She has completed Nutrition and Sports Nutrition certifications, trains in strength and functional fitness, and explores advanced health diagnostics to optimise wellness and performance. Inspired by leading thinkers, Donna's wellness philosophy isn't just about longevity – it's about showing up to work and life with energy and intention. Outside work, she enjoys health tech, longevity podcasts, family time in Apollo Bay and Melbourne's farm-to-table dining scene.



Alex Brown

Alex, known to most as ajb, is focused on the broader health, community services, higher education and travel sectors. She has 20 years' experience running talent management functions in many industries and multiple geographies and originally met Watermark's Interim partner team as a client. AJB is a passionate advocate for this talent pool as she has witnessed the impact of the transformational work many undertake – none more important than in the for-purpose sectors of Aged Care and Disability Services. Her colleagues describe her as a trusted adviser: she can assess a situation from everyone's viewpoint, navigate the best way forward and be relied upon to bring humour to the team and her clients whenever possible. She prioritises her fitness and is never happier than when dragging muddy tree trunks across a wet field at a military-style bootcamp or multi-day trekking in Cornwall or Chile. She has proudly visited every continent in the world and looks forward to watching England play test cricket against India in Mumbai someday!

# Interim partner team profiles cont.



## Pip Westhoff

Pip is a force to be reckoned with in the world of Interim Executive Search: she has delivered Interim search engagements for blue-chip, fast-growing clients across diverse sectors and her expertise spans Financial Services, Professional Services, Telecommunications and Technology. When it comes to finding top-tier talent, Pip doesn't just knock on doors – she kicks them down with enthusiasm. When deadlines loom, she's the one who gets things done yesterday and works at lightning speed. Outside work, Pip's alter ego emerges: Fur Baby Whisperer Extraordinaire for her beloved sidekick, Rosie (the four-legged wonder), who follows her every move. Pip's Zen game is also strong: when she's not conquering the corporate jungle, you'll find her practising yoga or mastering the art of balancing on one leg. Namaste, deadlines – Pip's got this.



## Francesca Conquest

Francesca is Watermark's spirited consultant blending professionalism with Scottish charm. She brings a sharp mind and a warm approach to every endeavour. Although her accent gives away her roots, her career journey speaks volumes: from practicing commercial law in the UK to agency recruitment, internal recruitment, managing legal secondments and setting up a legal secondments business from scratch. Francesca's passion is Interim – and she conquers the challenge of solving complex Interim requests with finesse. Her heart belongs to two young sons who light up her life and when she's not delving into the experiences and skills of our Interim Executives or advising clients, she's building pillow forts and playing superhero.



## Grace Atkinson

Grace is a dynamic professional in the executive search industry and a true force to be reckoned with, dedicated to raising the quality of leadership and governance in Australia. Both parents were executive search industry veterans, making it part of her DNA. She brings a wealth of expertise to her role, with more than 15 years' experience placing executives at board and C-suite levels across Property, Consumer, Aged Care, Disability and Housing. Grace's professional prowess is matched by her vibrant personal life. As a busy working mum, she is kept on her toes by three highly active children and a lively dog. Known for her amazing sense of humour, Grace's expressive nature and love for reading add depth to her spirited energy – and she is always first in line for a rosé at Thursday night drinks.



## Suzanne Mulvihill

Suzanne is the operations manager at Watermark and has been with the business more than 10 years. Her expertise as an Excel and database champion greatly contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the team. Her ability to navigate complex spreadsheets, manage databases, and organise and analyse data ensures accurate and reliable information for decision making. Suzanne's methodical approach, attention to detail and diverse skill set make her an invaluable asset – she is the glue that holds the team together. Outside of work, Suzanne enjoys comedy, podcasts and travelling. She's competitive, fun-loving and has a penchant for dressing up. Suzanne's family is everything to her: three beautiful children and Alfie the Cavoodle, who is everyone's favourite!

# Interim partner team profiles cont.



Alicia Wilson

Ali is the creative force behind Watermark's marketing magic! As the marketing manager, she infuses every branding and marketing project with a fresh and artistic touch. Ali's dedication to Watermark is supreme: she is always going above and beyond to ensure the company's success. Her colleagues in the Interim team describe her as a big-hearted visionary, blending creativity with cutting-edge digital expertise. With Ali at the helm, the future looks bright and innovative. When she's not crafting marketing masterpieces, you'll find Ali soaking up the sun and sea. Whether she's paddle boarding on Perth's stunning turquoise waters or showing off her skills on the touch footy field, Ali is always on the move and loving life.



Madeleine Stuart-Wright

Madeleine manages the administrative support for Melbourne Executive Search assignments, and her end-to-end project management approach ensures all aspects of the search run smoothly. Since joining the Watermark Melbourne team in 2019 she has worked on Search and Interim Executive assignments in both the public and private sectors. Beyond her professional role, Madeleine enjoys unwinding with a good book or spending time with family and friends. Madeleine delights in transforming a simple dinner into a themed affair or turning an ordinary outing into an epic adventure by uncovering gems along the way.



India Wilson

India is currently serving as Acting Community Manager for the Sydney Interim team, stepping in during Lizzie's maternity leave. In this role, she works closely with the Sydney Partners and wider team, supporting candidate engagement, coordinating Sydney-based events and acting as a key contact for the Interim cohort throughout their journeys. With experience across corporate events, public relations and higher education, India is skilled at keeping things running smoothly behind the scenes. She's confident managing schedules, supporting senior leaders and building strong, trusted relationships with colleagues and clients alike. Outside the office, India enjoys spending time in her home suburb in the Northern Beaches.



# Interim partner team profiles cont.



**Interim partner team  
Melbourne 2025**  
Left to right: Francesca  
Conquest, Jacinta Whelan  
and Donna Burr.



**Interim partner  
team Sydney 2025**  
Back row (left to right):  
India Wilson, Alex  
Brown, Grace Atkinson  
and Caroline McAuliffe.  
Front row (left to right):  
Pip Westhoff and  
Suzanne Mulvihill.

## Sydney

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