

# Australian Tech Leaders Survey 2024



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The Australian Tech Leaders Survey is a joint report from Datacom and the Tech Council of Australia that was conducted to understand the top tech trends that will be dominating in 2024. We asked a group of some of Australia's top tech leaders to share their perspectives on their priorities and expectations of the year ahead. Their responses provide valuable insight into the key opportunities and challenges projected to dominate this rapidly growing and important part of the economy.

As of May 2023, the tech sector was the seventh biggest employing industry in Australia with over 935,000 workers, or almost 7% of the Australian workforce. Tech workers are employed across the economy in banking, agriculture and government, as well as in tech firms creating software or developing hardware and infrastructure.

Key findings from this report present a glimpse into the future of technology for Australia as it continues to unfold in 2024, with tech leaders indicating an overall positive outlook for tech companies in Australia, highlighting the sector's ability to rise above the challenges and the opportunity for growth internationally.



## About Datacom

Datacom is Australasia's largest homegrown technology company and has been enabling the growth of the local digital economy for nearly 30 years.

We bring together innovative technology solutions and expertise to deliver robust, scalable and sustainable solutions for government agencies and some of the largest organisations in Australia.

With more than 6500 people working across Australia, New Zealand and Asia, Datacom is truly world-class in capability and we use our expertise to help local companies and communities to thrive.



## About the Tech Council of Australia

The Tech Council of Australia is the peak industry body for Australia's tech sector. Providing a trusted voice for Australia's technology industry representing the full spectrum of tech companies.

We aim to advise and engage with Australian governments, businesses, and the wider community to help support the ongoing creation, development, and adoption of technology across industries.

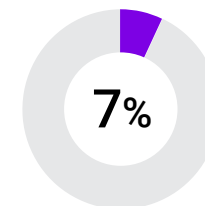
Our vision is for a prosperous Australia that thrives by harnessing the power of technology.



This report summarises the findings from a survey fielded between December 2023 and January 2024 by the Tech Council of Australia with 46 responses. Respondents are leaders of Tech Council member companies and Digital Employment Forum members.



**935K people**  
employed across Australia



Working Australians that are  
**tech workers**



# The defining technology trends for 2024






Anticipating and preparing for tech trends is a necessary task for any organisational leader. However, determining which trends matter most can be a challenging task when there are multiple competing technologies affecting the business landscape simultaneously.

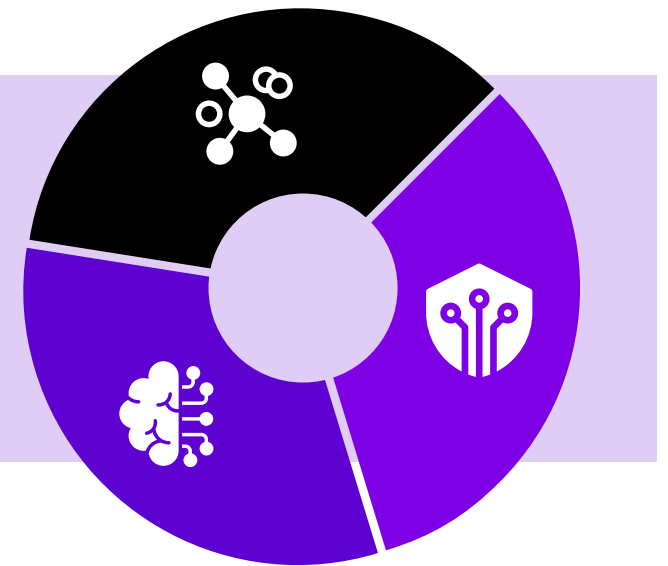
We asked Australia's top tech leaders which trends they forecast will shape 2024.

More than two thirds of tech leaders believe AI will be the defining technology trend in Australia in 2024. This follows the release of major new AI products in 2023, as well as a growing focus on AI regulation and governance by governments. Cybersecurity was the second most cited trend, reflecting the increasing incidence of prominence of cyber threats experienced in 2023.

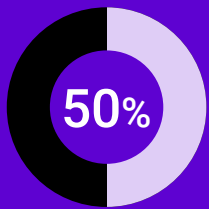
But lesser-known areas of the tech sector may become dark horse trends this year. Nearly 1 in 6 surveyed tech leaders think deep tech areas like quantum and space could overtake AI as the defining tech trend for 2024.

## Top tech trends for 2024

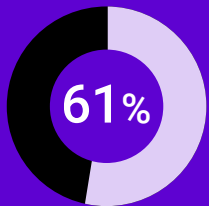
-  1. Artificial Intelligence
-  2. Cybersecurity
-  3. Quantum and Space



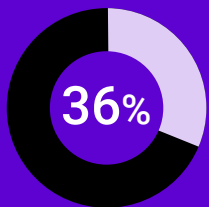
# Opportunities and threats for tech businesses



Half of respondents identify their top priority as **overseas growth**



Respondents want to see the government introduce incentives for **tech adoption across the economy**



Respondents feel the greatest threat to achieving growth in 2024 is **economic uncertainty**

The tech sector is an increasingly vital determinant of Australia's economic success. It's a source of new industries, jobs and exports. It helps diversify Australia's economy. It makes other industries more competitive, innovative and productive. That means growing the tech sector is a good for growing and strengthening the Australian economy.

We asked Australian tech leaders what they saw as the biggest opportunities and risks to the growth of tech businesses in Australia. They told us that Australia is a great place to work, but a challenging place to grow. Respondents were emphatic that overseas growth is the paramount opportunity for Australian tech businesses, with around half of respondents identifying this as their top priority.

*"We have good local talent and a humble and collaborative working culture."*

While Australia has key strengths as a tech sector – including great local talent, a collaborative working culture and a great lifestyle – survey respondents noted that it is a small market with limited opportunities for growth. That means international expansion is key to success for many Australia-founded tech companies and has resulted in a strong international reputation.

*"Australian tech companies are known for their operational excellence and thinking globally, due to the small local market."*

Leaders believe there are more opportunities to support scaling tech companies locally, even though we're a small market. Greater adoption of technology (produced by local and global companies) could increase opportunities for all companies, but particularly newer, smaller companies seeking their first big customer.

To support greater tech adoption across the economy, tech leaders see government as a key part of the solution. When asked to identify the most impactful change the Government could make to support tech sector growth in 2024, the majority (61%) chose introducing incentives for tech adoption and investment. This could involve adoption incentives across the public and private sectors.

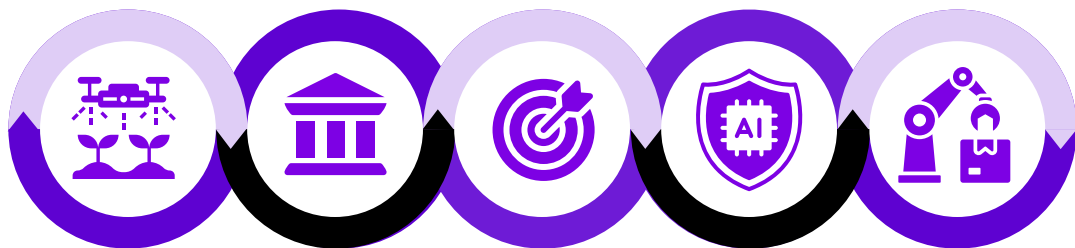
For tech leaders across the economy, the greatest threat to achieving growth in 2024 is economic uncertainty. A third (36%) of respondents cited this as the greatest risk.

But there's reason to still be optimistic: many leaders see Australian tech companies and workers as distinctly placed to weather these challenges with an international reputation for operational excellence and global thinking driven by starting in a small local market.



## Long term impact

Australia's tech sector is actively thinking about the broader impact of their work. We recognise that with the growing role of tech in the Australian economy comes a greater responsibility to ensure we're having a positive impact on the Australian community and environment.



This survey shows that most tech businesses have an active ESG or impact strategy in place. This is significant given that most of the Tech Council's members are small and medium businesses. But like many other companies across the economy, they face challenges in achieving their ESG goals.

The biggest challenge faced by tech leaders in achieving ESG or impact goals is cost pressures on the business as a whole. Another significant source of barriers includes external factors that they cannot directly control such as the diversity of training pipelines.

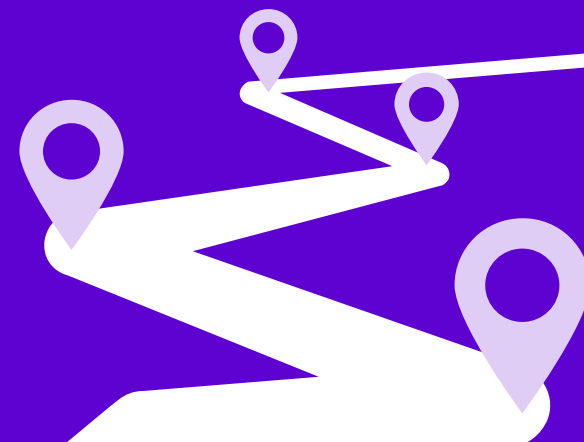
This underscores the importance of government and industry working collectively to address structural challenges facing the tech sector.



## Looking ahead

The insights gleaned from Australia's tech leaders reflect the constructive optimism of our tech sector. Leaders see significant potential for growth, the opportunity from AI and emphasise the strengths of the Australian tech ecosystem while not shying away from being honest about our biggest challenges.

Importantly, many of these challenges are shared across the economy and with government, which highlights the continued need to work together on new solutions.





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