

Last on AI, First Asked for Data

What official data says about software, AI and the pressure on mid-sized freight forwarders, 3PLs and couriers, and where small, fixed-scope work helps.

COREXLAB RESEARCH, OCTOBER 2026

1%

of Australian transport businesses used AI in 2024–25, against 12% of all businesses

813

transport companies entered administration in 2025–26, up from 196 in 2021–22

**1 July
2027**

mandatory climate reporting starts for mid-sized companies (Group 3)

Three things the data shows.

01

The industry is behind. Mid-sized firms, less so.

Transport ranks last of all industries on AI use in the ABS survey. But most transport businesses are owner-drivers. Across all industries, firms with 20–199 staff use AI at 22% and cloud at 90%, so the gap at a 50-person forwarder is narrower and more specific.

02

Pressure arrives as data requests.

Large customers now report on climate and ask suppliers for emissions estimates. Shippers expect delivery dates they can trust. Customs cargo reporting is being redesigned. Most of it reaches you as a customer's request, not a new rule.

03

The fix sits around your platforms, not instead of them.

Forwarders run on CargoWise, couriers on carrier platforms, 3PLs on a WMS. The useful work is in the gaps: status for shippers, reconciliation, and the data exports customers ask for.

Four forces landing on mid-sized operators.



Margins

Transport insolvencies have risen every year since 2021–22, and kept rising in 2025–26 while the count across all industries fell.

+10.8% **–3.9%**

transport
insolvencies,
2025–26

all industries,
same year



Customers

Delivery promises are judged closely. One shipping platform's data shows retailers quoting 5.2 days at checkout against about 2.2 days actual. Vendor data, sample not disclosed.



Compliance

Climate reporting Group 2 started with years from 1 July 2026, and suppliers get the emissions requests. Heavy vehicle law changed on 1 August 2026. Customs cargo reporting is being redesigned.



Platforms

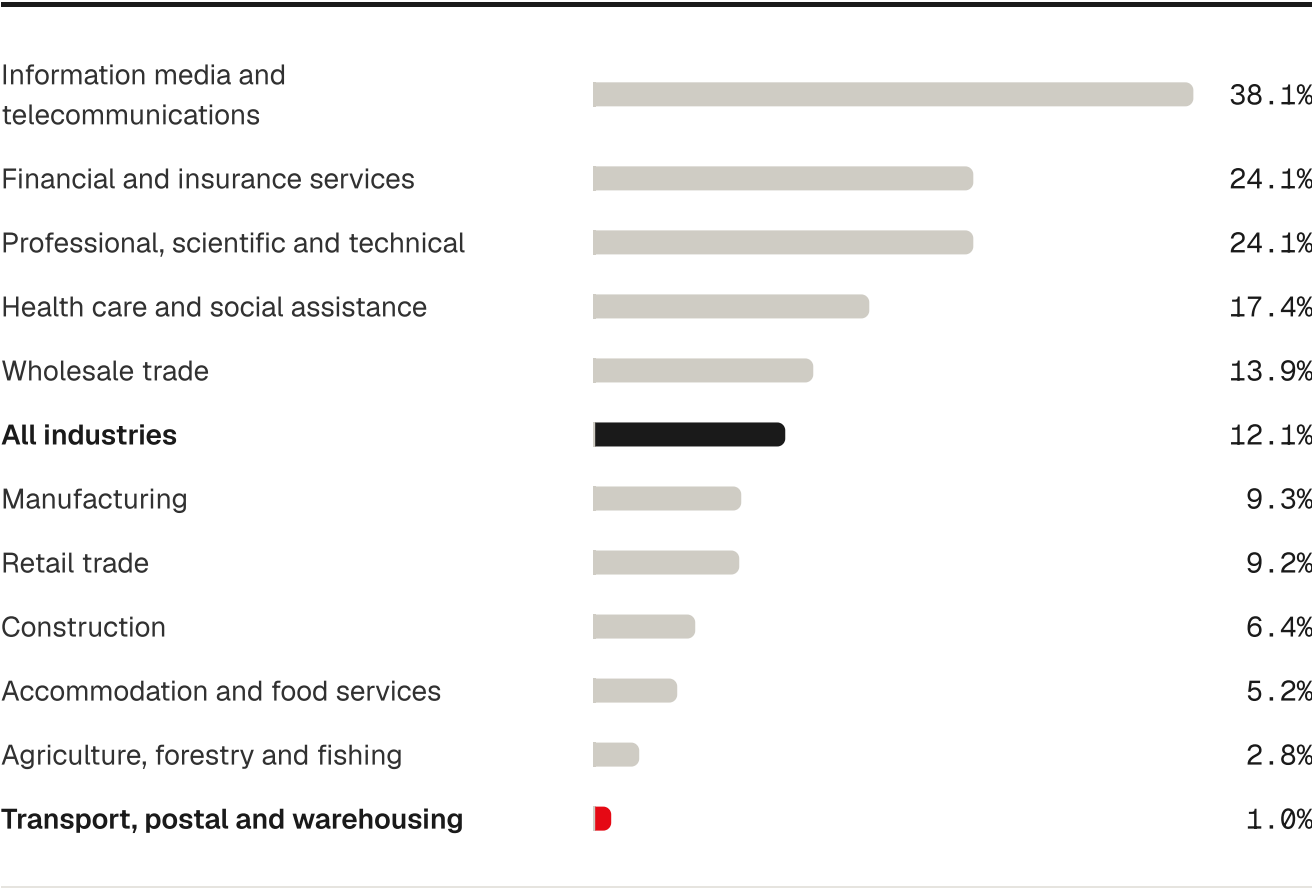
CargoWise moved to per-job pricing on 1 December 2025. The ACCC executed a search warrant at WiseTech in August 2026, in an investigation that is still open.

❖ 03 SIX FINDINGS

Where the gap is, and where it isn't.

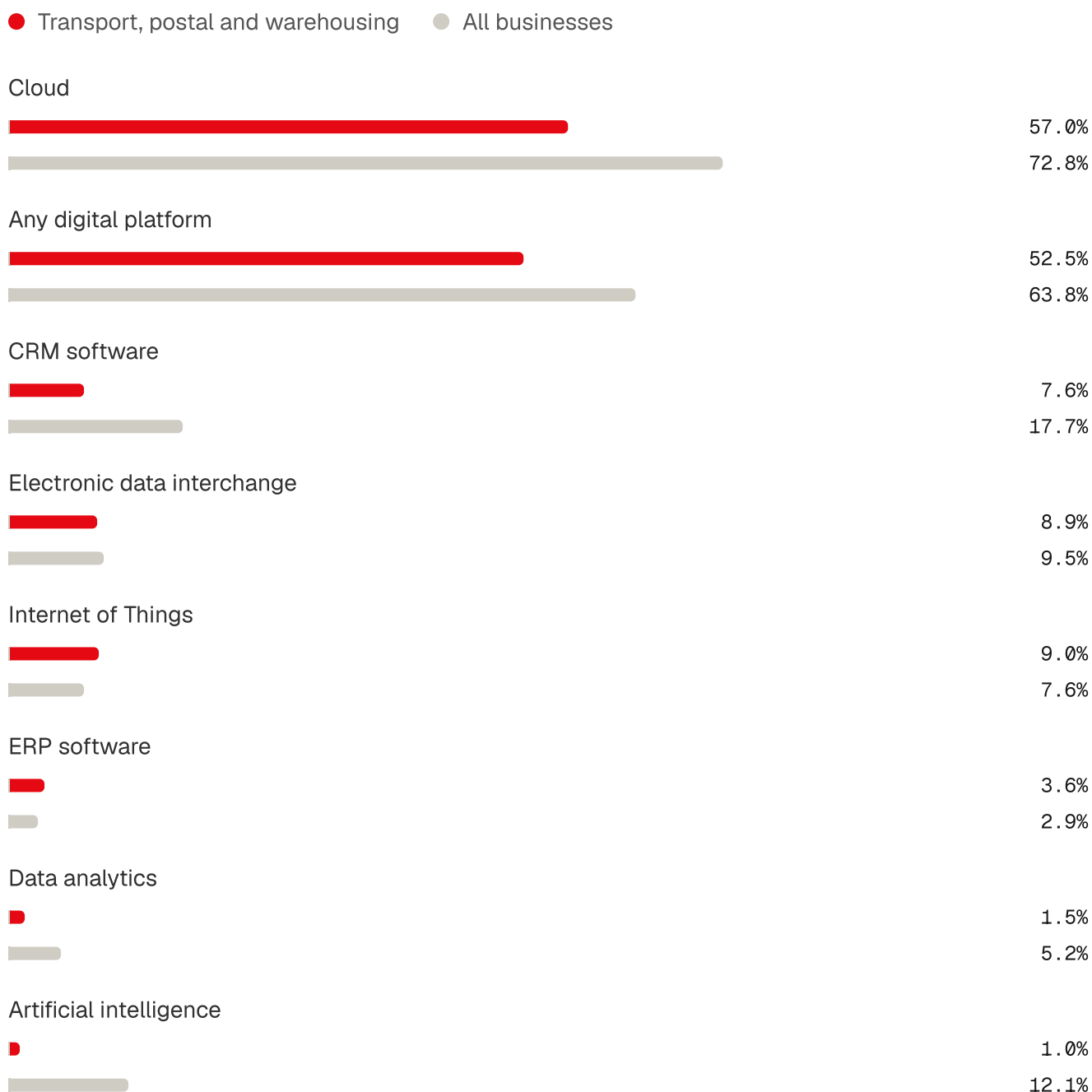
Official statistics first, then trade press. Vendor figures are labelled.

EXHIBIT 1 Businesses using AI, by industry (selected)



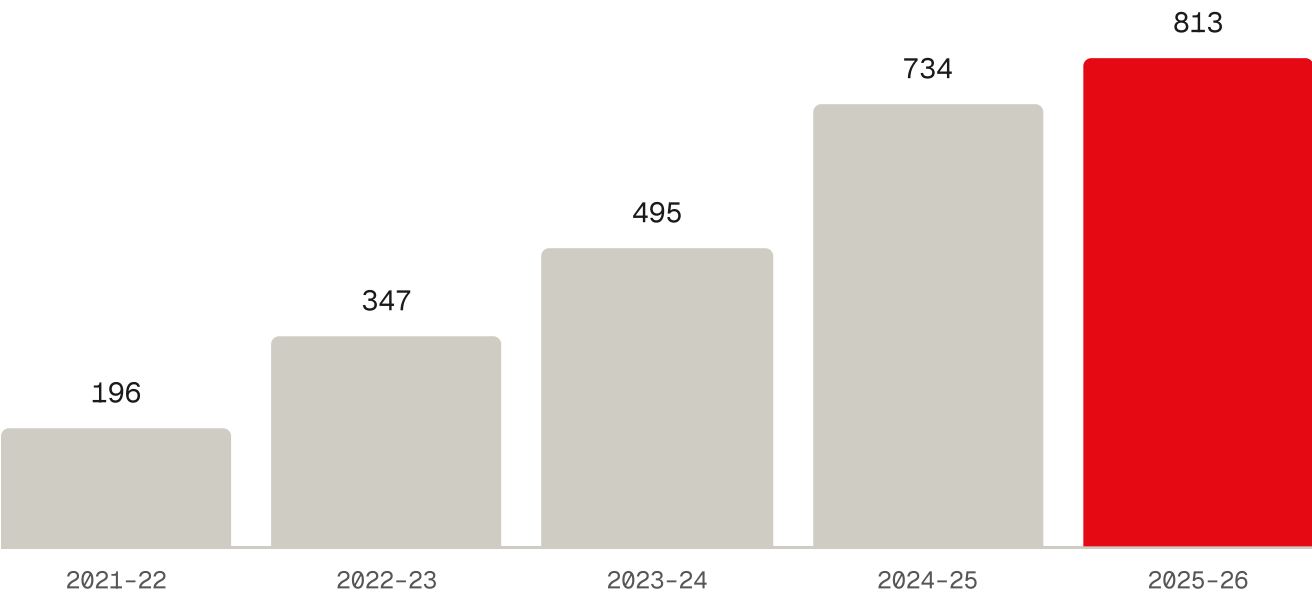
Source: ABS, Characteristics of Australian Business 2024–25 (June 2026), % of employing businesses.

EXHIBIT 2 Transport against all businesses, by technology



Source: ABS, Characteristics of Australian Business 2024–25 (June 2026), % of employing businesses.

EXHIBIT 3 Transport companies entering administration, by financial year



Source: ASIC insolvency statistics, Series 1 table 1.2 (October 2026). Companies, not groups.

FINDING 01

Last on AI and office software

In the ABS 2024–25 survey of about 7,000 businesses, transport ranked last on AI use and on innovation (27.6% against 45.6%), and well behind on cloud and CRM. NAB's separate survey of small and mid-sized businesses also put transport last on AI.

1.0% against 12.1%

ABS, AI use, 2024–25

21% against 42%

NAB SME survey of ~670 firms, April 2026

FINDING 02

Not behind on operations

Transport is at or above average on Internet of Things devices and ERP, and close on EDI. Trucks, scanners and telematics are already digital. The gaps sit between systems, and between you and your customers.

IoT 9.0% against 7.6% for all businesses

ABS, 2024–25

FINDING 03

The shortage is drivers, not the office

Truck drivers are in national shortage. Storepersons, forklift drivers, freight forwarders and customs brokers are not. Office software is about fewer errors and less re-keying, not replacing people you can't hire.

Freight Forwarder and Customs Broker: no shortage

Jobs and Skills Australia, 2026 list

FINDING 04

Failures are rising

Transport companies entering administration have roughly quadrupled in four years, against a falling count across all industries last year. Buyers under that pressure need small projects that pay back quickly.

813 companies in 2025–26

ASIC, October 2026

FINDING 05

Forwarders sit on one platform

CargoWise per-job pricing from 1 December 2025 drew objections from forwarder and broker associations in Australia and New Zealand. Forwarders describe separating the new charges on shipper invoices as manual work.

“It is unacceptable and we are taking it on.”

IFCBAA chief executive, Daily Cargo News, Dec 2025

“substantial market power in the supply of logistics software”

ACCC chair, via FreightWaves, Aug 2026

FINDING 06

Data requests come through customers

Climate reporting reaches Group 2 companies from years starting 1 July 2026 and Group 3 from 1 July 2027. ASIC expects them to use estimates for small suppliers, but the Small Business Ombudsman says suppliers find these requests hard to refuse.

Group 3: two of over 100 staff, over \$50m revenue, over \$25m assets

ASIC

“unable to decline or negotiate the request”

ASBFEO letter to ASIC, Jan 2025

Connect → Show → Report.

Work in the gaps around your platform in three steps. Each one is useful on its own, and each builds on the last.

EXHIBIT 4 A practical path that sits around your existing platform

Step 1

Connect

Pull job data, shipment events and documents from the systems you already run, such as CargoWise, your TMS or WMS and carrier platforms, through the APIs or exports they offer.

Step 2

Show

Give shippers and your team one view: status pages, delivery estimates and exception alerts, so a late job becomes a message you send instead of a call you take.

Step 3

Report

Produce what customers and regulators ask for from the same data: emissions estimates per customer, heavy vehicle records and customs document packs.

Works alongside the platforms you run.

We don't replace your forwarding, transport or warehouse system. We read from it and write back through the integration options your licence already includes, so your team keeps working where it works now.

CargoWise

MachShip

AI prepares, people decide.

Document extraction, tariff classification suggestions and drafted customer replies are checked by your staff or licensed broker before anything is sent or lodged. That follows the Australian Government's guidance to keep human control.

 05 WHERE TO START

Start where the re-keying and phone calls are.

Four common starting points for forwarders, 3PLs and couriers with 20 to 500 staff. Each is a fixed-price piece of work that plugs into the systems you already have.

“Where's my freight?” calls and emails

Customer service looks up the same jobs all day, and exceptions are found when the customer calls.

What we build: A shipper status page and exception alerts fed from your TMS or carrier events, with delivery estimates customers can check themselves.

CargoWise charges and disbursements

Per-job charges now flow through to invoices, and separating or explaining them falls to your accounts team.

What we build: A reconciliation tool that matches CargoWise charges to jobs and shipper invoices, and flags the ones that don't line up.

Commercial invoices keyed by hand

Invoice and packing list details are re-typed into customs entries, and classification is slow, careful work.

What we build: Document extraction and classification suggestions that fill the draft entry, with your licensed broker confirming every line before lodgement.

Emissions and compliance requests

Large customers send spreadsheets asking for emissions per shipment, and heavy vehicle records are gathered by hand for audits.

What we build: Emissions estimates per customer and record exports produced from your job data, using recognised estimation methods.

Start with a Sprint, with one clear measure.

01 · WEEK 1

Scope and agree the measure

We sit with the people who do the work, such as customer service, accounts or your broker. Together we pick one problem and one measure, for example status calls per week.

02 · WEEKS 2-3

Prototype on your data

A working prototype connected to a copy of your real data, shown to the team that will use it. You see a demo every week.

03 · THEN

Decide

You get a written plan and a fixed quote for the build. Go ahead with a Pilot, change the scope, or stop there.

SPRINT · 2-3 WEEKS

A\$5k–15k fixed

PILOT · 3-12 WEEKS

A\$15k–150k fixed

Both are fixed price, agreed before work starts. You own the code and data from day one.

Prove it small, then extend it.

EXHIBIT 5 From a Sprint to a system your customers use

● NEXT 30 DAYS

Prove

A Sprint on one problem, such as status calls or invoice keying, ending in a working prototype and a fixed quote.

● MONTHS 2-4

Build

A Pilot puts it into production with one team or one key customer, measured against the number agreed in the Sprint.

● AFTER THAT

Extend

Add the next customer or process on the same connection to your platform, without starting again.

Who you'd be working with.

Australian business

Corexlab Pty Ltd, ABN 81 668 487 189. Sydney office at 622 Harris St, Ultimo NSW 2007.

Sydney-led, delivered from Dhaka

A senior lead in Australia, with our engineering team in Dhaka. It's how we keep fixed prices within reach for mid-sized firms.

Australian data hosting

Your data is stored in Australia, unless you choose to keep it on your own servers.

Essential Eight-aligned

We build and run systems in line with the ACSC Essential Eight controls.

Insured

We hold professional indemnity and public liability insurance. Certificates of currency are available on request.



I'm a Sydney-based engineer with nine years of building production software, including the U-Send logistics platform and the Roaming Audit telecom auditing platform. I lead our team across Sydney and Dhaka. On your project, I'm your contact from the first call to handover.

Razu Ahammed

Founder, Corexlab

❖ 09 FAQ

Common questions.

Do we have to replace CargoWise or our TMS?

No. We build around the systems you run and connect through the integration options they already offer. Nothing in your core platform is changed.

Can you work with our CargoWise setup?

We work through the integration options your CargoWise licence includes. We confirm exactly what your setup allows during the Sprint, before any build starts.

How does AI fit, and who checks it?

AI only prepares work: it extracts fields from documents, suggests tariff classifications or drafts a reply. Your staff or licensed broker confirms it before anything is sent or lodged, and we never put customer personal information into public AI tools.

How do you handle security?

Access is role-based, and every change is reviewed by a senior engineer before it's released. We'll complete your security questionnaire before work starts, and we're happy to work with your IT provider.

What does it cost?

A Sprint is A\$5k–15k fixed over 2–3 weeks. A Pilot is A\$15k–150k fixed over 3–12 weeks. The scoping call and the Sprint turn that range into a fixed quote.

Who owns the data and the code?

You do. You can export your data in full at any time, and the custom code is kept in repositories you control. There's no lock-in and nothing renews automatically.

METHOD AND SOURCES

This report draws on 61 sources opened in October 2026. We started with government statistics and regulators (ABS, Stats NZ, ASIC, Jobs and Skills Australia, ASD), then industry associations and trade press. Vendor and bank surveys are labelled with their samples. Official statistics cover the whole transport, postal and warehousing industry, most of which is owner-drivers. No official source measures firms with 20 to 500 staff on their own, so read industry figures as context, not as a measure of your business. In Australia there are about 2,200 transport businesses with 20–199 staff and 270 with 200 or more; New Zealand has about 620 with 20 or more.

[ABS, Characteristics of Australian Business 2024–25 \(June 2026\)](#)

[ABS, Counts of Australian Businesses, July 2021–June 2025 \(December 2025\)](#)

[Stats NZ, Business demography statistics, February 2025 \(October 2025\)](#)

[ASIC, Insolvency statistics Series 1 and 2 \(October 2026\)](#)

[Jobs and Skills Australia, 2026 Occupation Shortage List \(October 2026\)](#)

[NAB, Embracing AI: adoption and opportunities for SMEs \(April 2026\)](#)

[ASIC, Sustainability reporting for small business](#)

[Daily Cargo News, Freight forwarders fume over tech giant's price move \(December 2025\)](#)

[FreightWaves, ACCC executes search warrant at WiseTech \(August 2026\)](#)

[eCommerceNews, Australian retailers face delivery gap \(June 2026; vendor data\)](#)

[National AI Centre, Guidance for AI Adoption \(October 2025\)](#)

Start with one process.

We'll talk through the problem, which systems it touches, and roughly what a Sprint would cost.

Book a scoping call

[or email reach@corexlab.com](mailto:reach@corexlab.com)

30 minutes with a senior engineer to discuss your scope, risks and next steps. No obligation.