**For release 2/12/2025**

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**News release:**

**The Bridge International press release**

**“The Bridge International Heartbeat of General Insurance Report 2025”**

**Sydney, Tuesday 2nd December 2025**.

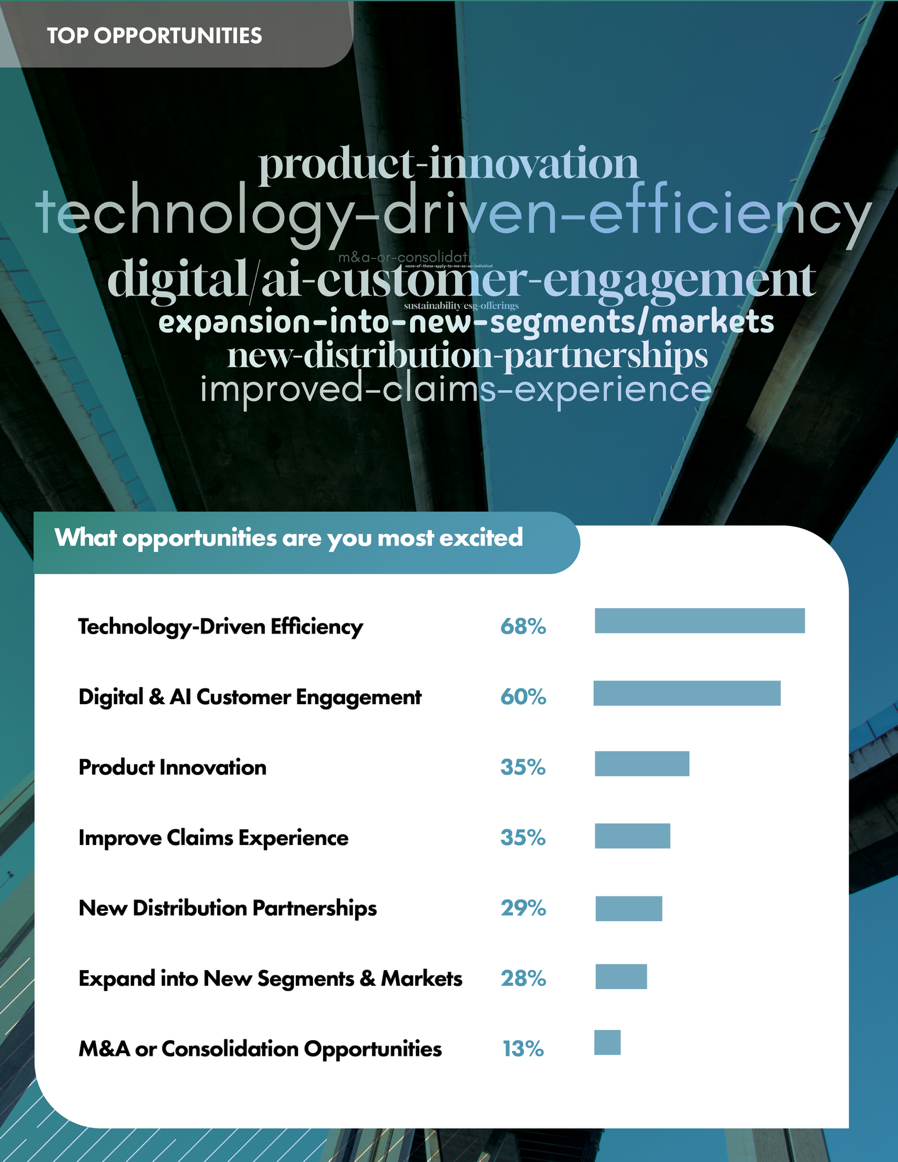
The Bridge International, in collaboration with the Australian and New Zealand Institute of Insurance and Finance (ANZIIF), has today released the **Heartbeat of General Insurance Report 2025** - an in-depth study capturing insights from across the general insurance industry in Australia and New Zealand.

The report brings together survey responses from professionals at large insurers, mid-size challengers, specialists, mutuals, brokers, underwriting agencies, and others from the insurance industry eco-system, with 77% of participants holding board, executive, or senior leadership roles. The findings offer a comprehensive view of industry sentiment, leadership transformation, workforce priorities, and the growing impact of technology and AI.

Stuart Blake, Managing Director and Co-Founder of The Bridge International, said: *“I am excited to be sharing the results from our inaugural Heartbeat of General Insurance Report. With exceptional insights from board members, executives and senior leaders, as well as the broader workforce, we now have a clear view of the opportunities and headwinds confronting the industry. Notably, economic and regulatory pressures rank as the primary threat ahead of climate change and competitive dynamics. While there is strong confidence in the transformative potential of technology and AI, we’re seeing serious concerns about talent retention and leadership succession. The organisations that will thrive in this increasingly challenging environment are those that recognise leadership, culture, and customer intimacy as their primary differentiator - not just technology or scale.”*



Encouragingly, 86% of respondents describe their workplace positively. The strongest results came from mutuals, specialist, and niche insurers with 100% of respondents indicating a positive or very positive workplace. However, despite this optimism, 39% of the respondents have looked to change roles in the past year, and a large percentage have considered leaving the industry altogether. Additionally, succession planning is emerging as a major vulnerability for the industry, with only 17% of respondents at large insurers and 6% at mid-size insurers very confident in their talent pipelines. In contrast, broker and underwriting agencies are far more confident.

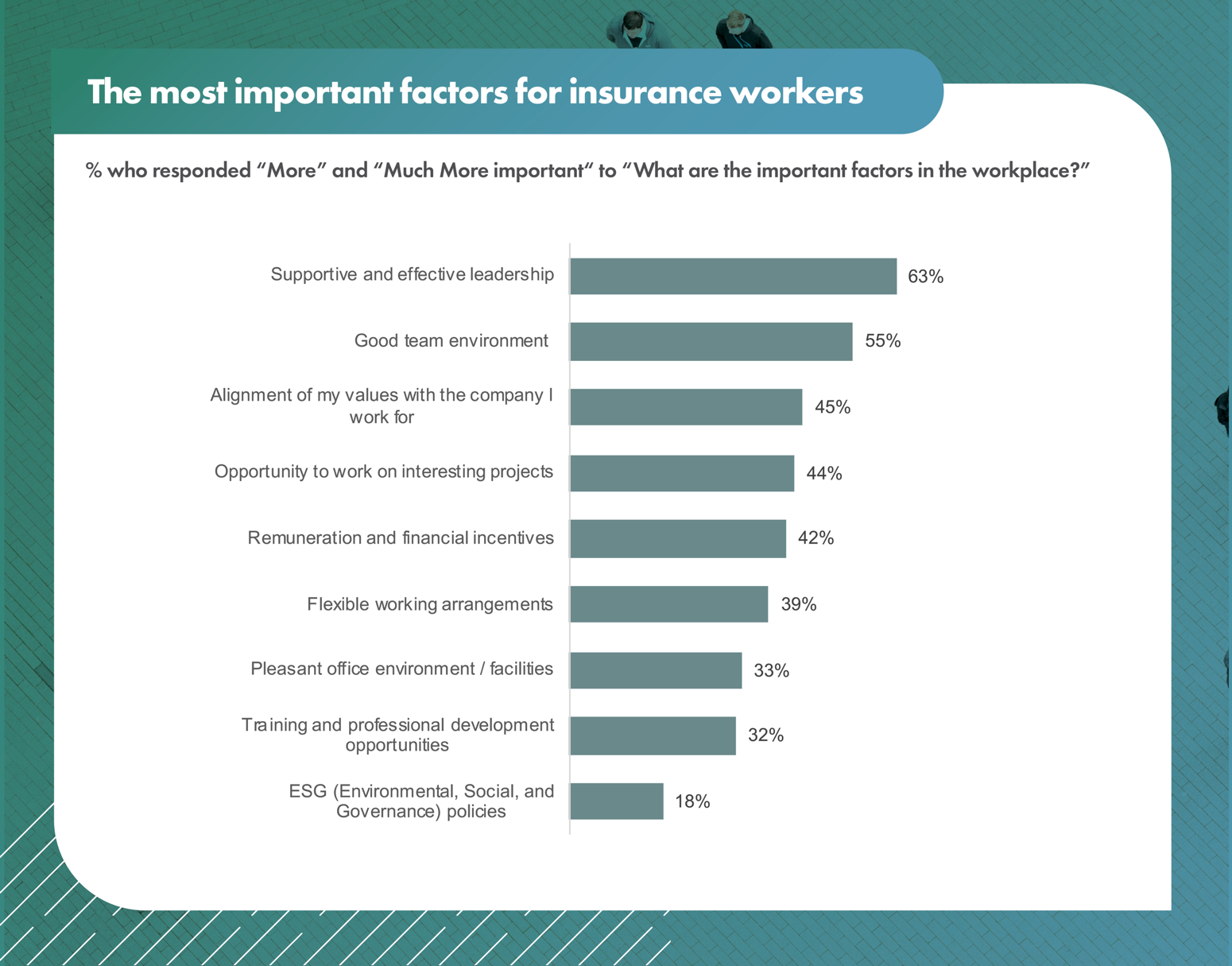
Respondents see the external environment as their biggest threat overall. 45% cited the economic and regulatory landscape as their top concern, reflecting uncertainty around inflation, pricing controls, and regulatory compliance changes. Technology developments follow closely at 42%, with respondents recognising rapid advances in AI and automation as both a significant threat, but also as an opportunity. Catastrophe and climate exposure ranks third with 33% of respondents, highlighting the growing impact of natural disasters and reinsurance costs.

Technology is viewed as the dominant source of opportunity for insurers over the next three years, with two in three respondents (68%) highlighting technology-driven efficiency as their biggest area of focus. More than half (59%) see digital and AI-enabled customer engagement as a key growth driver, signalling continued investment in automation, data, and experience design. The true measure of success of this investment will be whether it translates to a reduction in expenses and claims leakage, transferring to lower premiums and affordability along with sustained levels of profitability. Product innovation (35%) and improved claims experience (35%) also rank highly, reflecting a renewed emphasis on value creation and customer outcomes in a softening market where growth is harder to achieve.

When asked what leadership qualities will be most critical to navigate industry transformation, all leaders emphasised strategic vision (63%) and resilience (53%), while other non-board member or executive respondents indicated people leadership and engagement as highly relevant. AI and data literacy was rated at a similarly high level of importance by all respondents.

Factors that respondents look for in a workplace include supportive leadership, a good team environment, and alignment between organisational and their own personal values. These factors rate as equally important to remuneration, training and professional development, and flexibility, indicating a strong desire for individuals to be part of a high-performing culture and team.

The industry faces a critical inflection point: over the next five to ten years, we anticipate a wave of retirements alongside a growing intent among professionals to exit the sector. This convergence threatens not only a significant loss of institutional knowledge but also compounds the complexity of navigating transformational change. Addressing this dual challenge – retaining expertise while driving innovation – will be pivotal to sustaining competitiveness and resilience.



Katrina Shanks, CEO, ANZIIF, said: *“The Heartbeat Report shows an industry at a turning point. We are optimistic about technology, digital transformation and new ways of working; but we cannot overlook the talent risks and succession gaps highlighted so strongly in these findings. Now is the moment for insurers to lean into leadership, capability development and meaningful workforce investment. Those who act with clarity and pace will set the standard for the next era of insurance in Australia and New Zealand.”*

Stuart Brown, Partner and Insurance Practice Lead at The Bridge International, concluded:  
*“The insurance sector is facing a critical juncture, we need to invest in our people and insurance expertise.*

*The next phase of growth won’t come from technology alone, but from how insurers use it to strengthen people and capability. By combining deep insurance knowledge with data, automation, and digital fluency, we can create a workforce that is both skilled and adaptable. The organisations that get this right will move faster,*

*make better decisions, and turn transformation into a true competitive advantage. Thank you to everyone who took the time out to complete our survey. The response shows the industry has a strong heartbeat and there is a genuine passion for the sector from all levels of the workforce. We now have powerful insights - from the boardroom to the front line - on what’s required for the industry to continue to thrive. I encourage everyone to download a copy of the summary report from our website.”*

For more information or to download the full report, visit **https://www.thebridgeinternational.com/heartbeat**

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**About The Bridge International**​

The Bridge International is an alternative, innovative and purpose driven management consultancy operating in Australia, New Zealand and internationally. It is a values and purpose-driven organisation headquartered in Sydney, with teams in Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia.

The Bridge International’s leadership team brings deep C-suite experience, having walked in the shoes of their clients. This practitioner-first approach, combined with strong consulting capability, enables them to quickly define the problem and design pragmatic, fit-for-purpose solutions that are actionable and effective - not theoretical.

Clients trust The Bridge International to provide honest advice and work as an extension of their team, delivering measurable results and strong returns on investment. The company’s fair-value model reflects its fast-track approach, lower overheads, and commitment to having senior experts on every assignment.

The Bridge International’s practices span: Strategy & Corporate Development, Customer & Operations, Leadership, Culture & Capability, Insurance, Program Delivery & Embedment. The range of services offered enables the company to support a wide range of client needs, providing a bridge between strategy and execution, embedding sustainable solutions and transferring knowledge so that clients succeed over the long term.

CXO2 is The Bridge International’s customer obsessed business. The dedicated customer experience consultancy at The Bridge International is breathing life into everything customer – from strategy and insight to action and results.

Bridge to Goodis how The Bridge International turns business into good. Through its foundation, the company supports Lifeline, Cancer Council NSW, and Dementia Australia, helping create impact where it matters most.

[**https://www.thebridgeinternational.com**](https://www.thebridgeinternational.com)

**Stuart Blake, Managing Director, The Bridge International**

Stuart is Managing Director and Co-Founder of The Bridge International, and Practice Lead for Strategy & Corporate Development. He has over 30 years of experience in executive and board positions, including as Chief Executive at Wesfarmers and IAG. At The Bridge, Stuart leads strategy and corporate development, chairs CXO2 – their customer experience specialist practice and directs The Bridge’s foundation Bridge to Good, which supports Lifeline, Dementia Australia, and Cancer Council.

Stuart is recognised as an Insurtech pioneer, having launched and scaled Coles Insurance into Australia’s most successful non-traditional insurance brand at the time. He has spearheaded transformation programs across more than 30 brands, overseeing start-ups and large-scale operations generating over $1 billion in revenue. A seasoned negotiator, he has led multiple M&A transactions, most recently advising on the $642 million acquisition of RAA Insurance by Allianz. Stuart is widely regarded for driving cultural, customer, and commercial success through purpose-led transformation and innovative business models.

**Stuart Brown, Partner & Practice Lead General Insurance, The Bridge International**

Stuart is an experienced executive within Australia’s financial services and professional services industries, recognised for his depth across commercial leadership, data and insights, digital transformation, process design, and strategy. He has held senior roles across the insurance sector, managing major short-tail portfolios

at Suncorp, IAG, and Wesfarmers, and brings extensive experience across product and underwriting, claims, distribution, and strategic development. His leadership is underpinned by strong commercial acumen and hands-on experience in driving business performance and organisational change. Stuart has successfully led multiple large-scale transformation programs across the general insurance market, delivering measurable improvements in profitability, operational efficiency, and customer growth. He continues to work closely with executive teams and boards to shape strategy, build capability, and strengthen competitive performance in a rapidly evolving insurance landscape.

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