

FORESEE

CFOs and finance teams in Australia lean more into AI amid economic uncertainty

The current landscape of economic uncertainty is placing significant pressure on CFOs and finance teams in Australia. Their ability to anticipate critical developments and position their organisations to respond with agility is more crucial than ever.

In light of persistent concerns regarding the trajectory of the global economy—shaped by factors such as tariffs, retaliatory trade measures and geopolitical tensions, among many others—forward-thinking CFOs are investing in the right talent, technology and processes to gain a comprehensive understanding of near- and long-term trends. They are employing rigorous forecasting methods, sensitivity analyses and scenario planning to mitigate the impacts of regional and global economic turmoil. Additionally, in response to unpredictable supply chain disruptions and increasing cyber threats, they are leading cross-functional initiatives alongside C-suite executives to develop cohesive strategic responses.

Moreover, CFOs are continuously refining their strategic planning and financial planning and analysis (FP&A) capabilities. By leveraging emerging technologies such as AI, they aim to gain real-time insights into organisational performance and make timely adjustments to operations or investments. These initiatives not only enhance the resilience of the organisation but also contribute to its profitability.

These are among the key insights from Protiviti's latest [Global Finance Trends Survey](#), which gathered perspectives from CFOs and finance leaders worldwide. Another notable takeaway: There is a growing call for transparency within organisations. CFOs are tasked with deploying precise analytical tools and fostering trust in the data, key performance indicators (KPIs), analyses and models they produce. These leaders must address cognitive biases, misinformation, market noise and information volatility to provide clear visibility into various internal and external factors affecting their organisations. In essence, the CFO is positioned at the epicentre of this complex interplay of forces.

Key findings

Tariffs are affecting organisations ... but finance leaders are confident in their ability to navigate the challenges.

A majority of CFOs and finance leaders in Australia indicate that new and changing tariffs are having at least a moderate impact on their financial forecasting and reporting capabilities. In addition, four in 10 organisations report there has been at least a moderate impact on profitability. Yet most (87%) report they are confident in their organisation's ability to navigate current economic challenges and uncertainties. These findings speak to the improved FP&A and strategic planning capabilities CFOs and finance teams have developed over the past several years to foresee emerging developments and respond with precision and agility.

Security and privacy of data is the top priority.

Amid ongoing economic uncertainty, multiple and diverse impacts from tariffs, and the rapid emergence of AI and other new technologies, the security and privacy of data represents the top priority for CFOs and finance leaders in Australia. It's possible these results reflect, at least in part, some unease over the rising use of AI and related data and privacy concerns.

AI use in finance has risen dramatically.

A majority of finance organisations in Australia (66%) are currently employing AI, including generative and agentic AI. Finance areas in which AI is being used most frequently include financial forecasting, process automation and scenario planning.

Technology enablement is paying dividends.

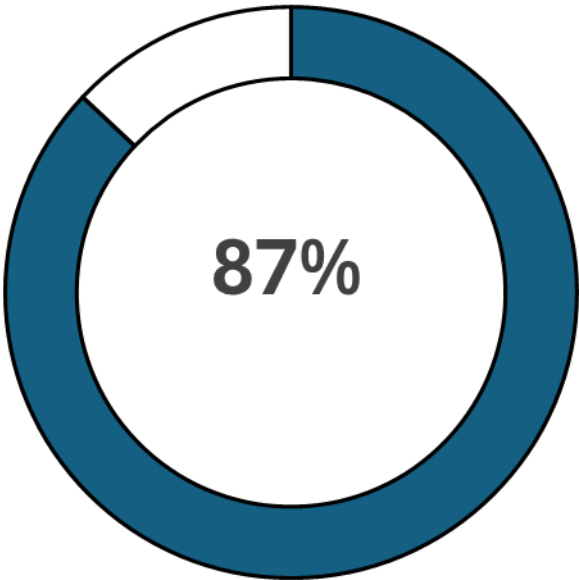
ERP enablement and technology modernisation, advanced analytics, and utilisation of cloud-based systems are among the top technology areas delivering valuable cost and efficiency benefits for Australia-based finance teams.

FP&A capabilities continue to deliver increasing value.

CFOs and finance teams are delivering greater value to the enterprise through their continued focus on improving FP&A capabilities to develop impactful strategic, financial and analytical insights to drive critical business decisions. In Australia, many finance teams are achieving meaningful and measurable progress in their organisation's cost optimisation efforts through the utilisation of cloud-based systems (65%), technology rationalisation (63%) and automation (50%).

Highlights from our research¹

87% are very or somewhat confident in their organisation’s ability to navigate current challenges and uncertainties in the economy.



Top 5 finance priorities

Australia

2025 rank	Area	Avg score
1	Security and privacy of data	8.0
2	Process improvement	7.7
3	Strategic planning	7.7
4	Leadership (within your organisation)	7.5
5	Routine reporting and closing activities	7.4

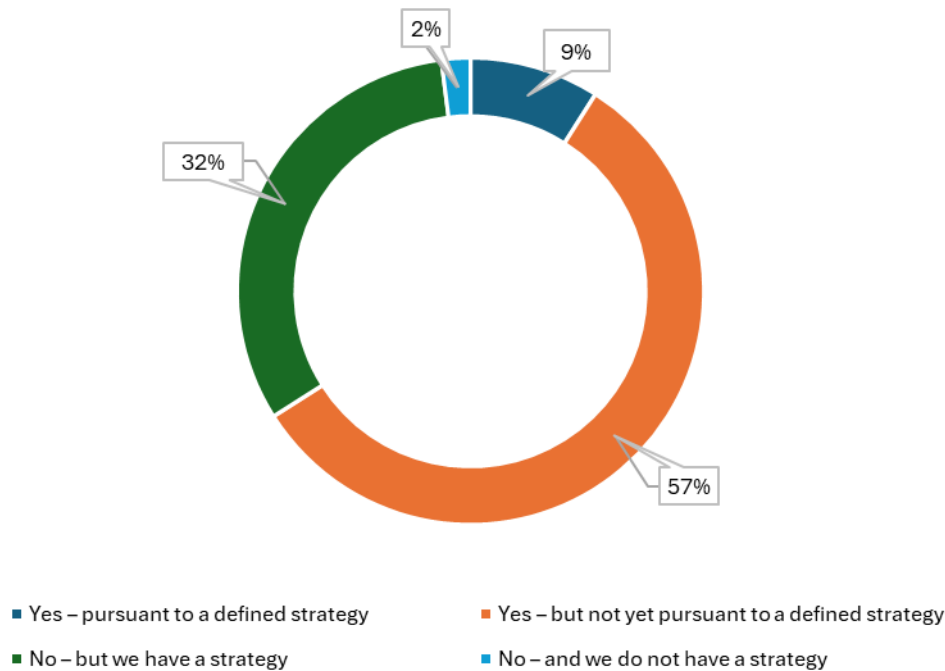
Global

2025 rank	Area	Avg score
1	Security and privacy of data	7.2
2	Strategic planning	7.1
3	Financial planning and profitability analysis and reporting	7.1
4	Process improvement	7.0
5	Leadership (within your organisation)	6.8

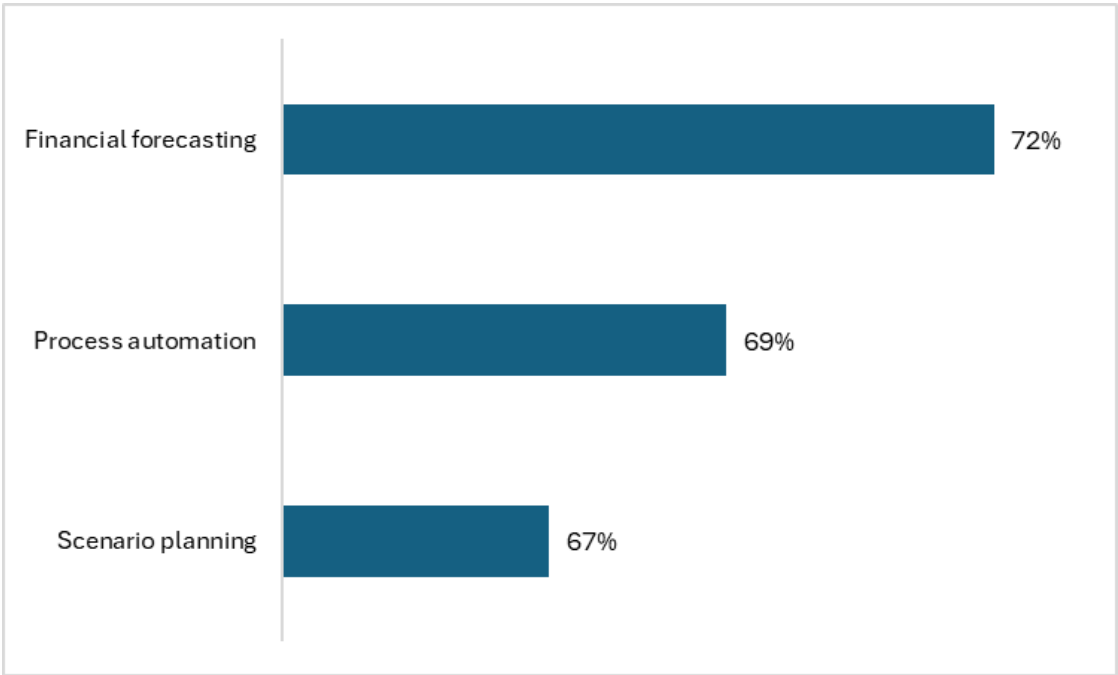
Based on this question: Please rate the following areas based on a 10-point scale, where “1” reflects the lowest priority and “10” reflects the highest priority for the finance function to improve its knowledge and capabilities over the next 12 months.

¹ Based on responses from 54 CFOs and finance leaders in Australia-based organisations.

66% of finance organisations in Australia are currently employing AI, including generative AI and/or agentic AI.



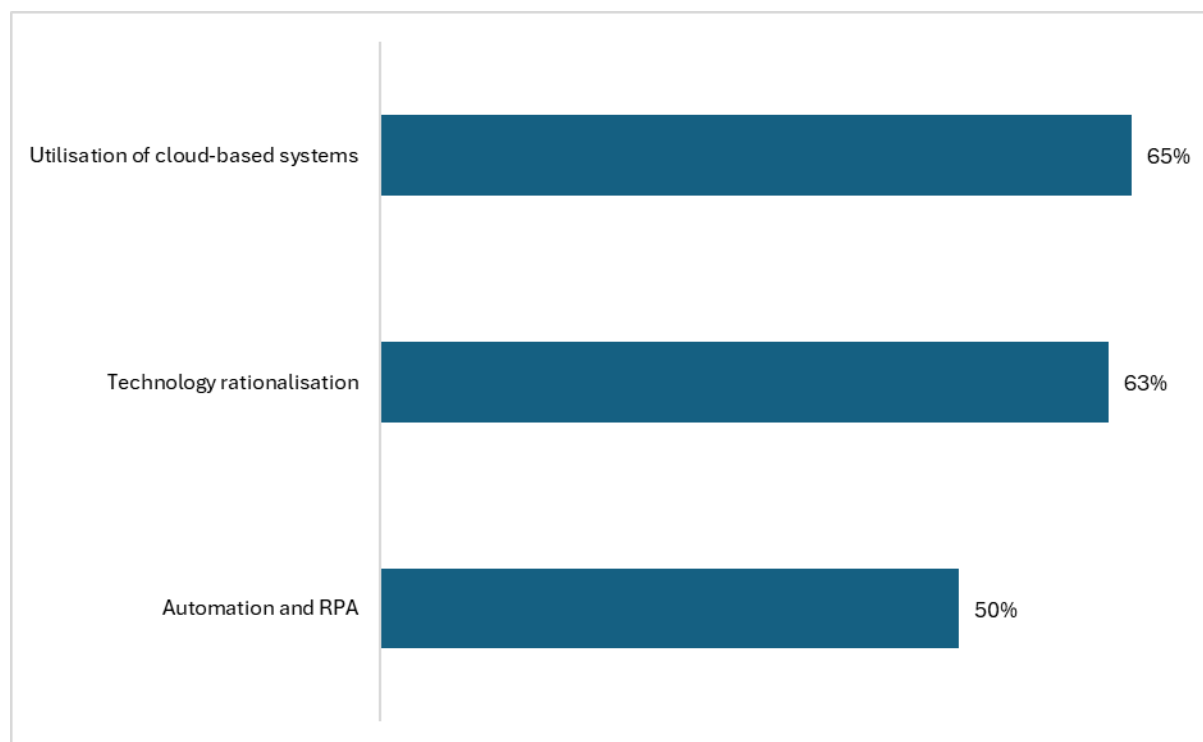
Top areas in which the finance organisation is currently employing AI (including generative AI and/or agentic AI)



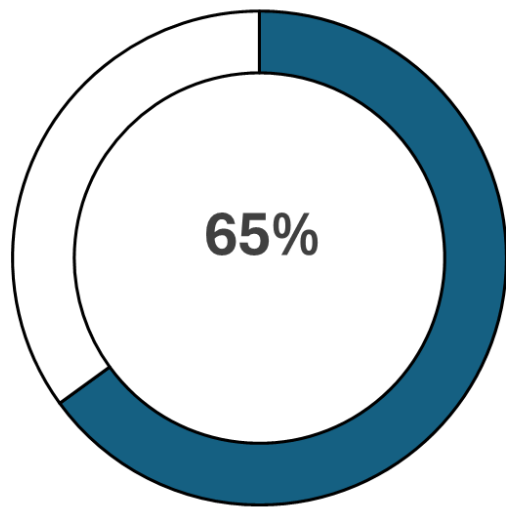
Technologies that are viewed as most valuable in achieving cost and efficiency benefits and improving finance projects

1	ERP enablement/technology modernisation/reconciliation tools
2	Advanced analytics
3	Utilisation of cloud-based financial systems

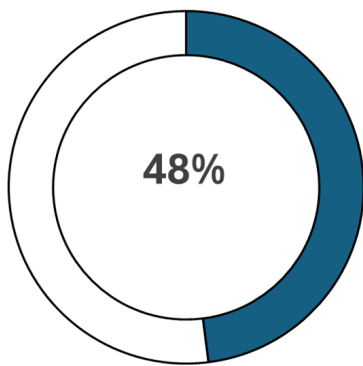
Areas in which there has been the most meaningful and measurable progress over the past year in terms of cost optimisation efforts



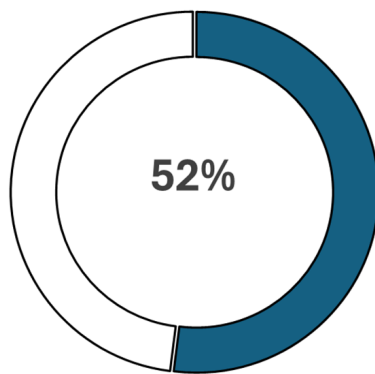
Two out of three finance functions in Australia-based organisations (65%) indicate higher levels of preparedness for ESG reporting.



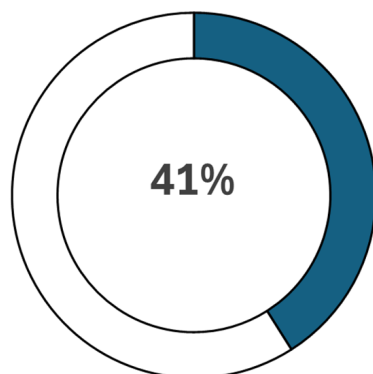
Impact of new and changing tariffs



Nearly half of finance organisations report there has been at least a moderate impact on their ability to prepare reliable and timely financial forecasts.



52% indicated that their ability to continue preparing reliable financial reporting and forecasting under required timelines has been at least moderately impacted.



Four in 10 organisations report that there has been at least a moderate impact on their profitability.

How Protiviti can help

Transform your finance function with Protiviti's expertise, designed to drive change and create value across your organisation. By leveraging intelligent data lineage, advanced digital tools and a tailored finance transformation strategy, we help organisations streamline operations, integrate emerging technologies, and enhance scalability. Protiviti's approach focuses on aligning people, processes and technology, ensuring optimal efficiency and regulatory readiness. Our solutions empower finance teams with robust data governance, real-time analytics and service models that adapt to shifting demands – all essential for sustainable enterprise-wide growth and resilience in a dynamic business environment.

To learn more, read our research report, *FORESEE: Assessing CFO and finance leader perspectives and priorities for the coming year*, available at www.protiviti.com/gl-en/survey/global-finance-trends-survey.

Contacts

Hirun Tantirigama

Managing Director

hirun.tantirigama@protiviti.com.au

David McIntosh

Managing Director

david.mcintosh@protiviti.com.au

Rupesh Mahto

Senior Director

rupesh.mahto@protiviti.com.au

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