

INDUSTRY USE CASE

The Education Sector



The top 3 challenges for HR professionals in the Australian & New Zealand education sector

Education organisations across Australia and New Zealand are under growing pressure to adapt to change while delivering consistent outcomes for staff, students and leaders.

AI is reshaping the way people work, economic pressures continue to tighten budgets, and employee expectations evolve, HR leaders are being asked to balance capability, compliance, workforce planning and operational efficiency across increasingly complex institutions.

This report explores the workforce challenges shaping the education sector today and how leading schools, universities and education providers are responding.

The top three challenges facing HR leaders in education are:

1

Scaling AI adoption across the institution

2

Navigating economic uncertainty

3

Retaining skilled educators and staff

Adopting AI

Despite leading many other sectors in AI adoption, the education industry still faces challenges in turning early success into organisation-wide transformation.

Education is the only sector where AI transformation exceeded expectations, with **38% of organisations reporting transformation in 2025, compared to 30% that predicted it the previous year**. This suggests many schools, universities and education providers are already exploring how AI can support workforce management, learning and operational efficiency. Individual adoption is also strong, with **82% of HR professionals saying AI works effectively for them personally**.

However, organisation-wide adoption remains limited. Just **25% say AI is being used extensively across their school or education organisation, while only 30% feel fully prepared to meet leadership expectations**. This highlights a growing gap between individual AI use and the systems, processes and workforce readiness needed to embed AI consistently across the institution.

As AI becomes increasingly embedded across workforce management, staff development, compliance training, recruitment and multi-campus operations, HR leaders must balance innovation with governance, capability development and organisational risk. The challenge is no longer whether AI can deliver value, but how to create the confidence, skills and foundations needed to embed AI across the institution and support future growth.

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30%

feel fully prepared to meet leadership expectations

CHALLENGE 2

Economic uncertainty

With **24% of education organisations citing the economic outlook as a key challenge**, HR leaders are under increasing pressure to maximise workforce investment while operating within tighter financial constraints.

Schools and education providers must balance cost management with maintaining teaching quality, supporting professional staff, meeting compliance obligations and delivering positive student outcomes. At the same time, leadership expectations continue to grow, requiring HR teams to demonstrate measurable value and support more informed decision-making.

The challenge is compounded by the cost of attracting, onboarding and supporting educators, professional staff and leaders. **Industry benchmarks show the average cost per hire is \$17,382, while new employees take approximately 32 days to reach productivity.** For education organisations, delays in hiring, prolonged onboarding and inefficient processes can place additional strain on teaching, support and leadership teams, impacting both budgets and organisational performance.

As organisations take a more cautious investment approach, HR leaders must balance immediate financial pressures with the workforce requirements needed to support quality teaching, student outcomes and long-term organisational performance.

24%

of education organisations
cite the economic outlook
as a key challenge

\$17,382

Average cost per hire

32

days to reach productivity

Employee turnover

While managing economic pressures remains a priority, retaining skilled employees has emerged as an equally pressing challenge. For 24% of education organisations, employee turnover is now a significant workforce concern.

Employees increasingly value career development, flexibility, wellbeing and meaningful work, making retention a more complex challenge than simply offering competitive remuneration. **While 22% of education organisations identify employee wellbeing as a significant challenge, a further 22% report difficulties aligning salaries with market rates**, highlighting that retention is being influenced by both employee experience and financial pressures.

In education, workforce continuity matters. The loss of experienced educators, faculty leaders and specialist support staff can disrupt student experiences, increase workloads for existing teams and result in the loss of valuable institutional knowledge. In a sector built on expertise, relationships and long-term development, sustained turnover can impact workforce capability, organisational performance and the ability to deliver consistent outcomes for students and stakeholders alike.

24%

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22%

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22%

report difficulties aligning
salaries with market rates

So what does it all mean?

While each challenge presents its own complexities, they rarely exist in isolation. The ability to adopt AI, manage workforce costs and retain skilled employees all depends on having accurate workforce data, clear visibility across the employee lifecycle and the insights needed to make informed decisions.

For schools, universities and education providers, these pressures are often compounded by growing compliance obligations, evolving workforce expectations and increasingly complex operating environments. As a result, many organisations are looking for a more connected approach that brings workforce, compliance, learning and performance data together in one place.

With a single source of truth, HR leaders can move beyond reacting to individual challenges and take a more proactive approach to workforce planning, capability development and organisational performance.

SOLUTION 1

Accelerate AI adoption with confidence

HOW

Transform AI from an individual productivity tool into an organisation-wide capability.

Successfully adopting AI requires more than new technology. Education organisations need visibility into workforce capability, professional development and compliance to ensure employees have the skills and support needed to adapt to new ways of working. ELMO brings these areas together in one place, helping institutions reduce complexity, strengthen workforce capability and embed AI with greater confidence

RESULTS

According to Forrester's Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) methodology, the independent study modelled results based on a representative organisation with 500 employees. These organisations saw measurable improvements in efficiency, visibility and decision-making including:

\$2,000 HOURS

Saved annual in HR admin enabling HR teams to focus on higher-value strategic initiatives

\$122,000 SAVED

Through the automation of routine HR admin tasks and reporting processes

80% FASTER REPORTING

Providing leaders with quicker access to workforce insights and more informed decision-making,

\$14,000 SAVED

Improved reporting efficiency through the elimination of manual data retrieval and consolidation.

\$268,000

Through enhance employee self-service. ELMO enables employees to independently manage routine HR

Product: ELMO HR Core

ELMO HR Core helps education organisations create that foundation by bringing employee information, organisational data and workforce reporting together in one place. With a single source of truth for employee records, teams can reduce manual administration, improve reporting, strengthen visibility across departments and campuses, and make more informed decisions as new technologies and ways of working are introduced.

This makes HR Core the right starting point for institutions looking to move AI adoption beyond isolated use cases and into a more consistent, organisation-wide approach.

ELMO HR Core helps education organisations:

- ✓ Maintain a single source of truth across educators, professional staff and leaders
- ✓ Improve visibility across workforce data, structures and headcount
- ✓ Reduce manual administration and fragmented reporting
- ✓ Support better decision-making as institutions adapt to new technologies and workforce demands

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J Jennifer Smith

Administration

Home

ELMO Assist

Profile

My Team

Leave

Documents

Learning

Performance

Remuneration

Survey

Analytics

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Expenses

Home > Samantha Perez



Samantha Perez

Math Teacher (MATH001) • samantha.perez@companyemail.co.au • 04123

Profile

Activities

Career

Payment details

Recognition

Employee details

General

Additional information

Diversity questions

Positions

Math Teacher (MATH001)

PE Teacher (PE001)

Contact details

Contact information

Next of kin

Emergency contact

Notes & contracts

Powered by ELMO Software

Improve efficiency from hiring through to readiness

HOW

When budgets are under pressure, hiring efficiency and time to productivity matter more than ever. Education organisations need a smoother path from attracting the right candidate to getting them ready to contribute quickly and confidently.

RESULTS

According to Forrester's Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) methodology, the independent study modelled results based on a representative organisation with 500 employees. For institutions managing tighter budgets and ongoing workforce demand, this means a more efficient hiring process and a better return on every recruitment investment. These organisations achieved measurable financial and operational benefits including:

\$772,000

Improving training development and delivery through a centralised repository of learning content, templates and training materials, reducing manual effort while accelerating training completion.

129%

Return on investment over three years.

\$38,000

Increasing recruitment efficiency by \$38,000 by streamlining job applicant management and reducing recruitment administration.

\$14,000

Improving reporting efficiency by \$14,000 through the elimination of manual data retrieval and consolidation.

Product: ELMO Recruitment & Onboarding

Recruitment helps reduce manual effort through automated workflows, talent pools, reporting and faster contract creation. Onboarding then helps new starters complete forms online before day one, move through tailored workflows and get a more structured, consistent start. Together, they help education organisations reduce friction, shorten ramp-up time and get new hires into role with less admin and less delay.

ELMO Recruitment and Onboarding help education organisations:

Automate recruitment workflows and accelerate contract creation

Create a smoother handover from candidate to employee in one connected flow

Reduce paperwork and manual follow-up before a new starter begins

Give new hires a more consistent and professional introduction to the organisation

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Home > Contracts

Contracts

Contract Workflow Management

Contract status ▾

User type ▾

Show: Active ▾

Employee	User type
SP Samantha Perez samantha.perez@email.com	Employee
BC Brady Craig brady.craig@email.com	Onboarding User
KC Kathryn Calhoun kathryn.calhoun@email.com	Onboarding User
LF Luka Fletcher luka.fletcher@email.com	Employee
MH Mathew Horn mathew.horn@email.com	View comment Employee
TA Teresa Acosta teresa.acosta@email.com	View comment Employee
TM Trevor Martin trevor.martin@email.com	Onboarding User
TJ Taylor Johnson taylor.johnson@email.com	Onboarding User

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Strengthen employee engagement and retention

HOW

Strengthen employee engagement and retention by supporting professional growth, career development and workforce capability.

In education, retaining experienced educators, faculty leaders and specialist support staff is critical to maintaining continuity and organisational knowledge. ELMO helps organisations connect performance, feedback and development planning in one place, enabling more meaningful development conversations, clearer career pathways and greater visibility into workforce capability.

RESULTS

By giving employees greater visibility into their development, performance and career progression, education organisations can foster stronger engagement, support long-term growth and create a workplace where people choose to stay. Organisations using ELMO reported improvements in employee engagement, performance visibility and workforce development, including:

- 1 Greater engagement with annual staff surveys and higher employee satisfaction through an integrated and centralised employee experience.
- 2 Improved performance visibility, enabling managers to track progress against goals and take proactive action throughout the employee lifecycle.
- 3 More structured and meaningful performance and development conversations through connected goals, feedback and development planning.
- 4 Greater ability to identify and support high-potential employees and future leaders.
- 5 More consistent and transparent remuneration, progression and development decisions.

Product: ELMO Performance Management

ELMO Performance Management helps education organisations create a more connected employee experience by linking goals, feedback and development planning in one place, making performance conversations more useful and progression decisions more transparent. That supports stronger engagement, clearer career pathways and better visibility into workforce capability over time. With ELMO, leaders can:

- ✓ Support meaningful development conversations
- ✓ Identify and nurture future leaders while strengthening succession planning across key teaching and operational roles.
- ✓ Create clearer pathways for career progression, professional development and workforce retention.
- ✓ Make performance, remuneration and progression decisions with greater consistency, transparency and confidence.



360 Review

Due in 3 weeks ▾

Receiving feedback is essential for personal and professional growth. It provides valuable insights into our strengths and areas for improvement, allowing us to refine our skills and enhance our performance. Constructive feedback fosters a culture of open communication, encouraging collaboration and innovation within teams. This checkpoint will focus on receiving feedback from your peers.

Reviewers
These are the reviewers who will participate in this review.

CM	Carissa Moore	Complete
	Pedro Delfino	Not started yet
BC	Bethany Consentino	Complete

Overview

Checkpoints

360 Review

Recommendations



360 Review

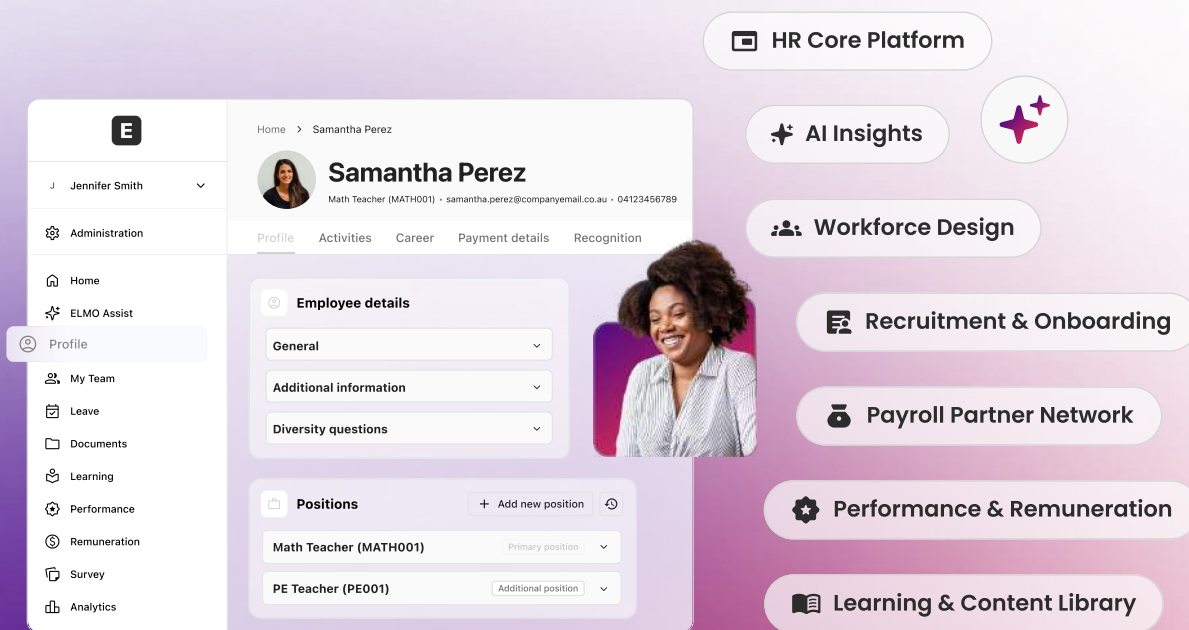
Due in 3 weeks ▾

Building future-ready education workforces

Whether the priority is improving workforce visibility, supporting educator development, strengthening compliance or retaining key talent, education organisations need systems that help them respond to change with confidence. ELMO brings workforce data, learning, performance, and payroll together in one place, helping schools, universities, and education providers reduce admin, strengthen capability, and make more informed workforce decisions.

To see how ELMO can support your education organisation, book a demo and explore how a more connected workforce platform can help you navigate AI adoption, retention pressure and economic uncertainty with greater confidence.

The Complete AI Workforce Platform™



Founded in 2002, the ELMO Group comprises ELMO Software, Breathe HR and Rotageek. ELMO Group is a multinational provider of people management solutions, trusted by over 18,000 organisations across Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

ELMO is The Complete AI Workforce Platform™. It unifies HR and Payroll on one connected data foundation and layers native AI to turn workforce data into insight and action. ELMO's mission is to get Australia and New Zealand's workforce ready for what's next and supports the full employee lifecycle, from recruitment and onboarding to learning, performance, payroll and more.

Backed by ISO-certified security, Australian-based data hosting and local experts who guide change throughout the journey, ELMO helps mid-sized organisations build the foundation for AI-ready workforces of tomorrow.