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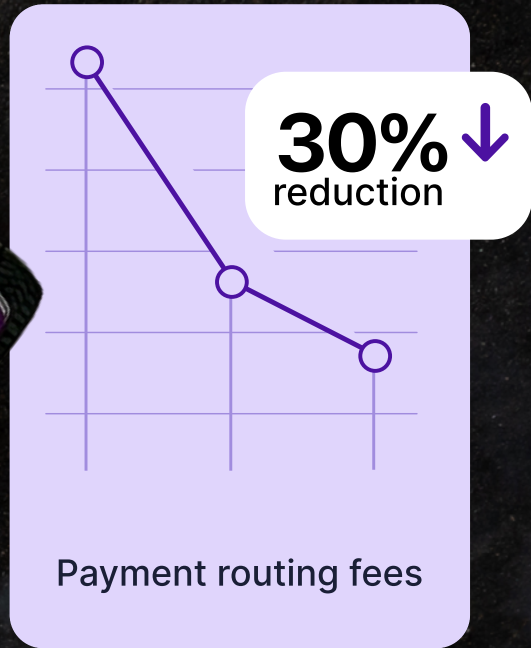
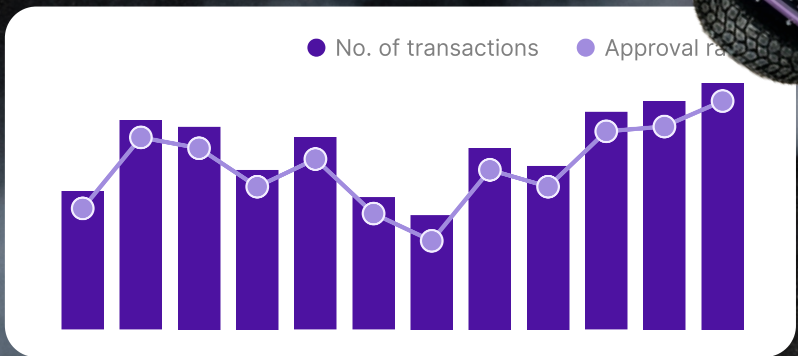
Merchant Insider Report 2026: AUS edition

Payments matter





experience decides

Contents

Introduction

The payments imperative in Australia

Key numbers at a glance:

Payments quality and the ability to manage payments is the #1 driver of software use in Australia.

95%

of Australian businesses see business management software as important.

18%

of Australian businesses are highly satisfied with their payment experience, despite nearly all identifying payments as critical.

62%

of Australian businesses are looking to change their business software in the next year.

This report lifts the lid on the priorities and pain points of Australian merchants, giving software platforms the latest insights into this ever-changing audience.

In 2025, with frustrations around payment experience high on the agenda, business software that can simplify operations is needed more than ever. This is reflected in the 84% of Australian businesses who say their management software is more important to their business today than it was three to five years ago.

Within that software ecosystem, embedded payments are now a firm fixture in the Australian market. Payment capabilities are widely seen as essential to business operations, yet satisfaction with how they are delivered remains mixed. This creates a tension between expectation and experience – one that increasingly shapes how merchants evaluate their platforms.

98% of AUS businesses see payment capabilities as important to their business software.

Australian businesses are operating in an environment of rising complexity: more digital channels, more payment types and greater pressure on cash flow visibility. Against that backdrop, payments are no longer simply functional infrastructure. They influence customer experience, operational efficiency and ultimately platform loyalty.

This report focuses specifically on the Australian merchant perspective, exploring where platforms are meeting expectations, where gaps remain and how they can strengthen confidence and retention.

Inside you'll discover:

- Merchants' levels of satisfaction with business software and embedded payments.
- Drivers of software choice and switching behaviour.
- Barriers to deeper usage and confidence.

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Methodology

We surveyed 1,542 businesses across Australia, the UK and the US that use business management software. This report compares the 522 Australian businesses to the wider pool.

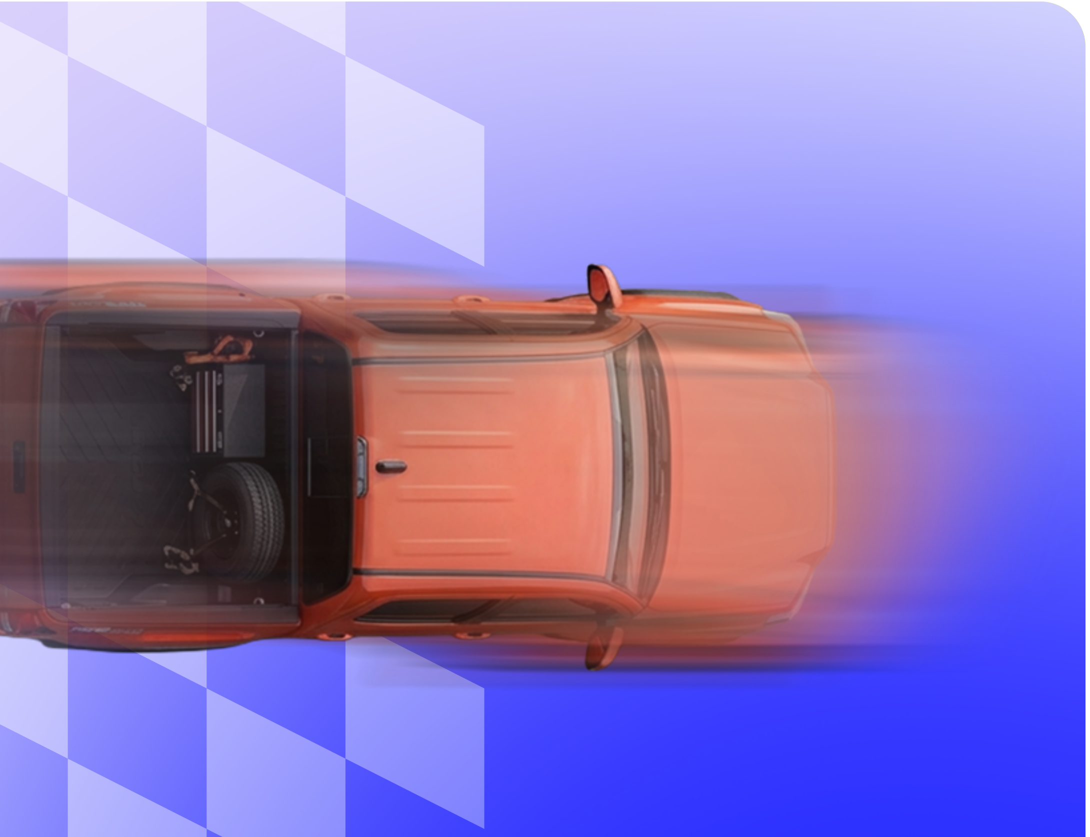
Respondent characteristics:

- Senior finance and technology decision-makers
- Responsible for software adoption and investment
- Representative of a broad cross-section of SMBs
- Annual business revenues between $500k and $500m

Payments matter

Australian businesses clearly recognise the importance of payments within their software ecosystems. However, satisfaction levels suggest the experience isn't always keeping pace with rising expectations.

This reflects a broader shift: payments are no longer evaluated purely on functionality. Businesses increasingly weigh platforms based on how seamlessly payments integrate into workflows, how clearly financial data is presented and how easily issues can be resolved.



Two of the top five factors for Australian businesses likely to switch software are payment related:

#2

Greater ability to manage outgoing payments.

#4

More in-depth information around payment schedules from customers.

18%

Only 18% of Australian businesses are extremely satisfied with their software in relation to payments. This is the lowest in the three markets surveyed and nearly half that of the U.K.

This reinforces the gap between how important payments have become and how well they are currently being delivered. As expectations rise, gaps in the payment experience increasingly shape how merchants evaluate

Experience drives churn

The payments experience is increasingly tied to platform loyalty. When workflows become inefficient or integrations fall short, businesses begin reassessing their providers.

The ability to support a wide range of payment methods is one of the clearest pressure points.

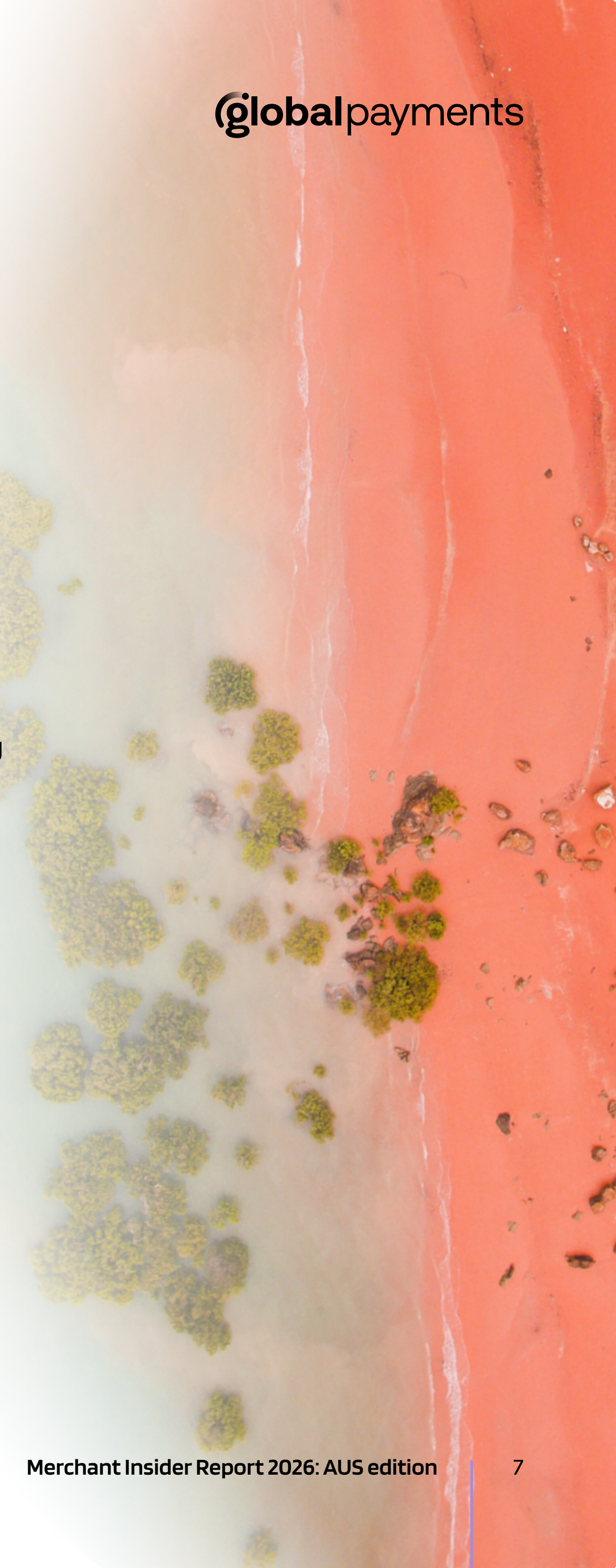
55% of Australian businesses are highly likely to switch for the ability to accept all types of payments.

Switching decisions are shaped more by operational challenges than strategic change. Time spent managing systems, integration limitations and innovation gaps all feature prominently among the reasons businesses consider switching to a different platform.

These findings reinforce the idea that payments aren't evaluated in isolation. Instead, they shape overall perceptions of software usability, efficiency and scalability.

Top switching drivers in Australia

- More innovative solutions available.
- Too much time spent managing the solution.
- Integration improvements are needed.



What Australian businesses want from payments

For Australian merchants, payments are no longer simply a transactional function. They now play a central role in how businesses manage cash flow, monitor performance and maintain visibility across day-to-day operations.

While integration and payment acceptance remains important, merchants are increasingly looking for capabilities that give them greater control over how money moves through their organisation. From supplier settlements to transfers between accounts, they want payment capabilities that reduce administrative effort and provide clearer financial insight.

This demand for greater control is reflected in switching behaviour.

52% of Australian businesses are highly likely to switch for the ability to better manage outgoing payments and move money between accounts.

56% of Australian businesses are highly likely to switch for faster access to funds from customer card payments.

For finance teams, efficiently managing outgoing payments can significantly reduce operational friction. Businesses also want improved visibility into incoming transactions, including when funds are expected to arrive and how payment flows affect their overall cash position.

When platforms support these needs effectively, payments become more than a transaction tool – they become a core operational asset.

Fragmented workflows erode loyalty

The reality

Even when payment capabilities are embedded, the experience isn't always seamless. Australian businesses report challenges around integration and lack of guidance on how to maximise the payment tools available within the platforms they use. These are key barriers to getting the most out of their software solutions.

This creates an education gap: businesses may have access to advanced capabilities but can't confidently put those capabilities to good use.

#1 challenge:
Integrating business and payment workflows.

Over 1/3
of businesses state that learning how to use the solution is the biggest barrier to using software tools more frequently.

This highlights how integration is not simply a technical consideration; it shapes how effectively businesses can run day-to-day operations. When payments, reporting and operational systems don't align cleanly, visibility suffers, manual work increases and platform usefulness plunges.

The risk

As payments move closer to the centre of day-to-day operations, shortcomings become more visible and more costly. What might once have been tolerated as a minor inconvenience now disrupts cash flow, customer experience and internal efficiency.

1/3 of Australian merchants say their customers have had bad experiences using the payment facilities within their business software.

21% of Australian merchants are unhappy with their payment capabilities and want to change them.

Australian merchants are particularly sensitive to how payments perform within their software platforms. Reliability is non-negotiable. And when customers encounter friction at checkout, trust in the entire platform can quickly erode.

This means retention risks are increasingly linked to the quality of everyday payment workflows. These frustrations build gradually through repeated moments of friction, and when those moments accumulate, switching intent rises. And in a market where alternative vertical SaaS providers are readily available, the barrier to switching is lower than it once was.

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Fraud is no longer a tick box

#1 driver

of software choice in Australia: Security and data protection.

Fraud detection and risk management are ranked as the most important payment capability by Australian businesses.

In Australia, trust is now central to platform evaluation rather than being just a background requirement. As more financial activity moves inside business management software, merchants are placing greater scrutiny on how platforms protect them against fraud. Data security, fraud prevention and regulatory compliance are no longer viewed as technical tick boxes. They are part of the merchant experience itself.

Businesses expect visible fraud controls, strong data protection practices and reliable compliance frameworks that evolve alongside emerging threats.

Security and reliability also intersect directly with operational flow. Payment disruptions, false declines or unclear risk processes can interrupt revenue streams and damage customer relationships. In this context, trust is about enabling a confident payments experience.

Platforms that treat fraud prevention as an integrated part of the payment experience, rather than a separate layer, are better positioned to earn long-term loyalty. Those that fail to demonstrate visible follow-through risk undermining user confidence, even if their technical controls are robust.

Fraud capabilities and robust security are becoming key points of differentiation for platforms.

The opportunity

Delivering capability and confidence

For platforms operating in Australia, the path forward is not about adding more features. It is about helping merchants take full control of their payment flow.

What merchants want from their payment platforms:

Seamless ecosystem integration
Merchants need to connect seamlessly with accounting systems, banking, reconciliation processes and reporting tools. They want clear visibility into cash flow, simple management of outgoing payments and faster access to customer funds. Above all, they want confidence that payments will work reliably every time.

Education and enablement
Scalable infrastructure, expert support and clear onboarding guidance all play a role in turning capability into adoption. When education and enablement sit alongside functionality, merchants are more likely to use advanced financial tools consistently and derive more value from them.

Platforms that master this dual approach can create a virtuous cycle. As confidence grows, product adoption deepens. As adoption deepens, platform value increases. And as value increases, retention strengthens.

In Australia's competitive software landscape, delivering confident payment experiences creates a durable advantage built on visibility and trust.

Three important data signals:

1. Australian businesses see payments as essential, yet only a small minority are highly satisfied with the experience.
2. From acceptance flexibility to the customer checkout experience, payments are increasingly driving switching decisions.
3. Security, fraud prevention and data protection now sit at the heart of platform choice in Australia.

Conclusion

Bridging the payment experience gap

Australian merchants are not questioning whether payments matter. That debate is settled. What they are evaluating is how well their platforms deliver.

The gap between capability and confidence is becoming the defining factor in competitive positioning. When payments feel fragmented, opaque or slow, trust erodes and switching intent grows. When they feel seamless, transparent and supported, loyalty strengthens.

But just as importantly, success increasingly depends on how payments are brought to market. Payment providers and software platforms are partnering more closely to align product, enablement, onboarding and go-to-market execution.

When payments are rolled out as part of a coordinated strategy, adoption accelerates and revenue potential expands. When they are treated as a standalone feature, value often goes unrealised.

Platforms that meet the payments imperative – technologically and strategically – may not only retain customers but attract them from competitors.

The opportunity for platforms now is to move beyond capability and deliver confident, embedded payment experiences that their merchants can depend on.

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Unleash your payments potential

Embedded payments are the language of platform growth.

If payments could be working harder for your software, it's time to power what's possible.

Connect with us at platforms.worldpay.com/en

Worldpay combined with Global Payments in January 2026 to create a leading payments technology and software company that powers commerce for businesses of all sizes worldwide.
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