CARPET INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED



Associates Advisory Note

Industry News | October 2026

Topic: AI assisted purchasing and the Australian carpet market

The Carpet Institute of Australia Ltd

AI and purchasing decisions

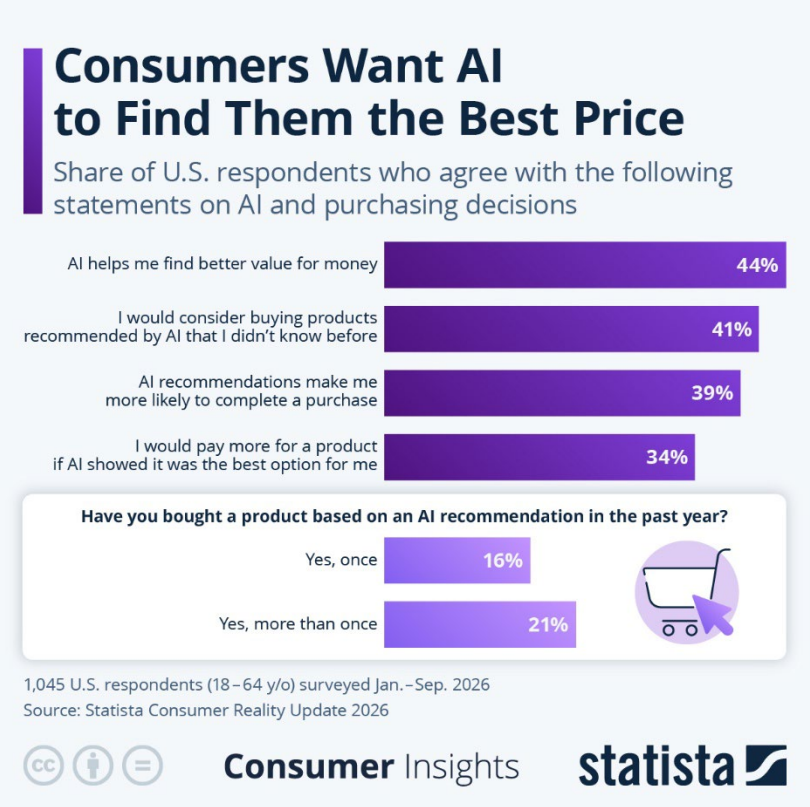
Based on Katharina Buchholz's Statista article published on the 5th of October 2026.

Why does this matter for Associates?

AI tools are becoming part of the way consumers research products and compare value. For associates across the carpet industry, this grants a special opportunity to make choosing carpet and service information easier to find, understand and check. A buyer may use AI's recommendation before contacting a supplier, visiting a showroom or requesting a sample. Because of the advancements in how consumers consume knowledge, the information available at that stage could influence which businesses they consider.

What the Statista findings show

Katharina Buchholz's article, published by Statista on 5 October 2026, draws on 1,045 US respondents aged 18 to 64 surveyed between January and September 2026. It reports that 44 per cent wanted AI to compare prices and find better value, 41 per cent were open to discovering unfamiliar products, and 34 per cent would pay more if AI made a good case for a product. A further 39 per cent said recommendations made a purchase more likely. On the other hand, 42 per cent would not trust AI to make purchasing decisions for them.



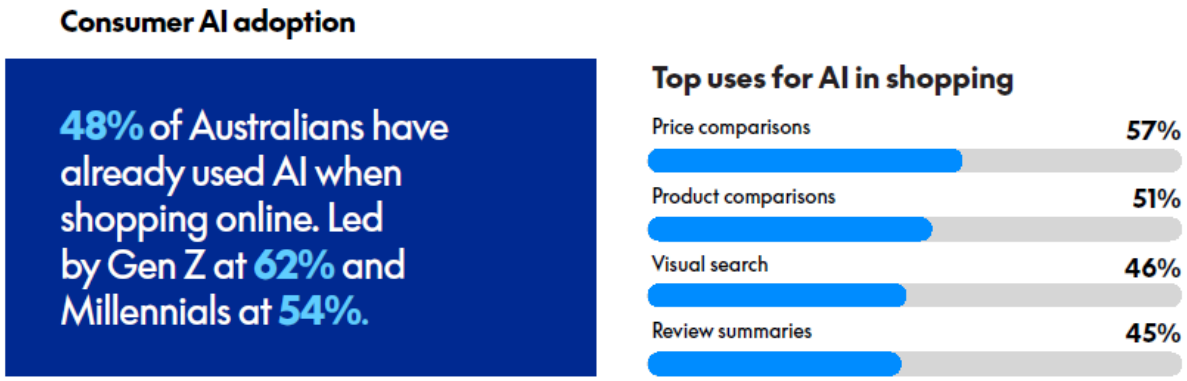
Note: All figures are as reported by Statista from Jan – Sept 2026 and are general findings on purchasing behavior

Implications for the Australian Market

Australian buyers are already using AI

There is local evidence that this behaviour extends beyond the United States. PayPal's eCommerce Index 2026 reports that 48 per cent of Australians had used AI when shopping online. The report was based on an online study conducted by Fifth Quadrant in October and November 2025, involving 1,012 consumers and 410 businesses in Australia. It identifies price and product comparisons among the uses of AI in shopping.

The implications below are therefore an assessment of how these broader behaviors could affect the Australian carpet market, rather than a forecast of sales or adoption.



Note: PayPal's eCommerce Index 2026 does not isolate textile flooring from general online purchases

Product discovery may become more competitive

A homeowner might use AI to compare carpet options for a busy family home, while a project buyer might use it to prepare an initial list of suppliers. A carpet range that is unfamiliar to the buyer could be entered into the chat box, giving out a list of published answers online. For Australian suppliers, including businesses representing overseas brands, a local product page should make Australian availability, sample access and the responsible local contact clear.

Value will need a clearer explanation

The interest in finding better value could encourage more comparisons between products and suppliers. Carpet businesses can help buyers make those comparisons by explaining what is included in a price or quotation, and where differences in construction, performance or service matter. A material price alone may omit underlay, freight, installation, floor preparation and waste allowances. Where those costs depend on the project, the information should explain what needs to be assessed before a meaningful comparison can be made. Associates offering premium products or specialist services should explain their benefits in terms a buyer can check. Relevant evidence might include a product classification, applicable test report, warranty conditions or a documented project example.

Human judgement remains part of the purchase

The hesitation about handing decisions to AI suggests that associates should retain easy access to people and samples throughout the buying process. AI may help a buyer narrow the choices, but colour, texture and underfoot feel still need to be assessed through samples or a showroom visit. Installation conditions and suitability for the intended use also require checking. Associates can make that next step easier by placing sample requests and access to technical advice alongside the product information buyers use to research their options.

What Associates can do now

A useful starting point is to review how your business explains a small selection of products or services online. This applies to importers and distributors, retailers, installation and maintenance providers, and associates supplying equipment, software or technical services. Each needs information that helps a prospective customer understand the offer and decide when to seek advice.

- Make key information accessible. Publish clear descriptions of what carpets your supply, where it is available and who it is suitable for. For carpet ranges, include fibre, construction, backing and product identifiers. Keep current technical documents linked to the relevant range rather than relying only on a general brochure.
- Check consistency across the supply chain. Product names, codes, specifications and images should agree across manufacturer, distributor and retailer materials. When a range changes or is withdrawn, update the local information and ask channel partners to do the same.
- Explain comparisons in practical terms. Show buyers which product features or service inclusions affect suitability and total cost. Where performance or environmental benefits are claimed, give access to the supporting evidence and describe its scope.
- Test the information buyers encounter. Try a few typical customer questions in an AI tool and check whether your business appears, whether the details are accurate and which sources are cited. Record errors and correct the underlying published information where possible. This is a diagnostic exercise, not a guarantee of future recommendations.
- Measure the effect on enquiries. Ask customers how they found the business and whether an AI tool helped them research their options. That can provide local evidence before committing to new technology or changing marketing expenditure.

Disclaimer

The Statista article and chart concern AI and purchasing decisions among US consumers. PayPal's research provides Australian context but is also about online commerce broadly and is published by a commercial payments provider. Their results should not be treated as directly comparable, or as evidence of growth over time.

Further information

Article text and chart shown in this note be found here:

Statista Consumer Reality Update 2026

PayPal's eCommerce Index 2026 report

Coming up at CIAL

The Annual General Associate Meeting will be on the 29th of October at 2 pm. If you have not yet, please confirm your attendance from the calendar invite sent out.

Have something to share?

We would welcome news, project examples or questions from associates for future advisory notes, and the questions raised at our associate meetings will also help us to identify the topics where further guidance would be most useful, so please complete this form if you have anything you would like to share.

Carpet Institute of Australia – Associate Member Experience & Feedback Survey – Fill out form