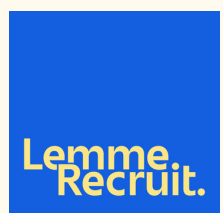


Jan 26
(for Oct- Dec 25)

In the Loop with
LemmeRecruit.

a quarterly guide to the **NZ** data & AI market you can leverage.



Snapshot

82%
of data roles advertised are permanent

30 days
to get an interview from application (when applying direct)

2
final round interviews to secure a permanent role in this market

- WFH**
- Contract min 3 days
 - Permanent min 2 days

Financial Services & Insurance
are the most consistent sectors hiring

SKILL	DEMAND	SUPPLY	TRENDS
Analytics Engineer	High	Tight	Roles are being consolidated due to cost pressures, combining responsibilities into a single position.
Data Engineer	High	Tight	Experience expectations not aligned with available data engineering capability.
AI Transformation Lead	Medium	High	Senior data leaders are looking at long term month contracts, rather than just permanent positions as 'Head of' or alike, to get themselves into a meaty AI program or transformation

From the founders

Over six months on from launch, building LemmeRecruit on our own has been energising, deeply rewarding, and a little bit exhausting. Partnering with clients we know well, or are getting to know well, to shape their data teams, and supporting candidates through meaningful career moves, has reinforced why we built this business in the first place. A particular highlight has been seeing the brand take on a life of its own, from LemmeRecruit T-shirts out in the wild to being fully operational and active across New Zealand, working with big brands Kiwis know and trust.

As we move into the new year, momentum is clearly returning to the market. Just weeks into January, we're seeing organisations re-engage in growth and workforce planning conversations, with a strong pipeline of data, AI, and tech hiring expected in the months ahead. Demand is beginning to build steadily rather than reactively, and we're already embedded in early-stage discussions with teams preparing to hire.

The outlook is promising, and we're entering this next phase with confidence, strong relationships, and a clear view of what's coming.



Stability Over Opportunity: A Market Defined by Caution, Not Ambition

'Rock-solid' brands win talent

Organisations with strong, credible employer brands are standing out. Brand trust is a critical factor in whether candidates are willing to engage, progress, and ultimately make a move. Where brand confidence is lacking, even well-designed roles are struggling to convert.

WFH lifestyle remains a key driver

Hybrid work is now a baseline expectation for most data professionals. We're seeing continued relocation outside of the main cities like Auckland, with flexibility being a non-negotiable part of lifestyle decisions. Organisations enforcing five-day, in-office mandates are consistently losing out on top talent.

Consultancies filling capability gaps

Cost sensitivity remains high. Restructures and hiring freezes are creating capability gaps across data teams, leading organisations to lean more heavily on consultancies. This allows work to continue while shifting spend to different cost centres and avoiding long-term headcount commitments.

Risk-averse candidate market

Despite clear interest in new opportunities, many data professionals are hesitant to move roles right now. Ongoing economic uncertainty means stability is highly valued, and changing roles is perceived as a higher-risk decision than in previous years - even for those who are actively dissatisfied.

Time to hire continues to drag

Permanent and fixed-term hiring timelines have slowed significantly. This is largely driven by:

- Lack of clarity around the 'why' when looking to fill positions in a team
- Over-reliance on MSPs without clear ownership
- Brand and role saturation, with some data positions sitting open for three months or more

This is creating candidate fatigue and increasing drop-off late in process.



IN MY OPINION - CHAPTER 19

"I have given that exact feedback to the exec team this for 12 months now and they still won't do anything about it. It's costing us talent"

"Are things slowing down?"

"The New Zealand market is taking a hit right now. I hope it starts to bounce back"

"We want what we can't afford and resetting that mindset to potentially compromise on calibre is proving difficult"

'IN MY OPINION'

This segment is posted on our LinkedIn company page every Thursday.

These are not made up quotes. They're straight from people in the Australian and NZ data & AI market so that you can get a sense for what's going on out there.

Some of it's hilarious, some informative and some simply reassuring.



Final Thoughts

Recommendations for hiring managers

- Invest in credibility and clarity. Strong employer branding and a clear, compelling “why” behind each hire are now critical to attracting and converting talent, especially in a risk-averse market.
- Flexibility is table stakes. Hybrid working is no longer a perk. Rigid in-office mandates are directly reducing access to top-tier data talent.
- Move with intent. Slow, unclear or over-managed hiring processes are driving candidate drop-off. Clear ownership and faster decision-making are essential.

Recommendations for candidates

- Prioritise stability and substance. Assess the strength of the organisation, leadership, and long-term vision as carefully as the role itself.
- Be selective but prepared. Opportunities are there, but processes are slower. Staying engaged and ready to move when the right role appears is key.
- Flexibility cuts both ways. Hybrid work remains achievable, but candidates who articulate how they work effectively in flexible models are standing out.



We both hope you had a good festive period, got some rest, ate some good food and spent time with people you loved.

We're looking forward to visiting NZ mid March 2026.

Reach out if you are around!

Emily & Laura