The City of Charles Sturt Business Survey 2025 Results



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Earlier this year we conducted a business survey to better understand and further support the needs of our business community.

These survey results help us to shape the services, programs, grants and activities we deliver to our business community.

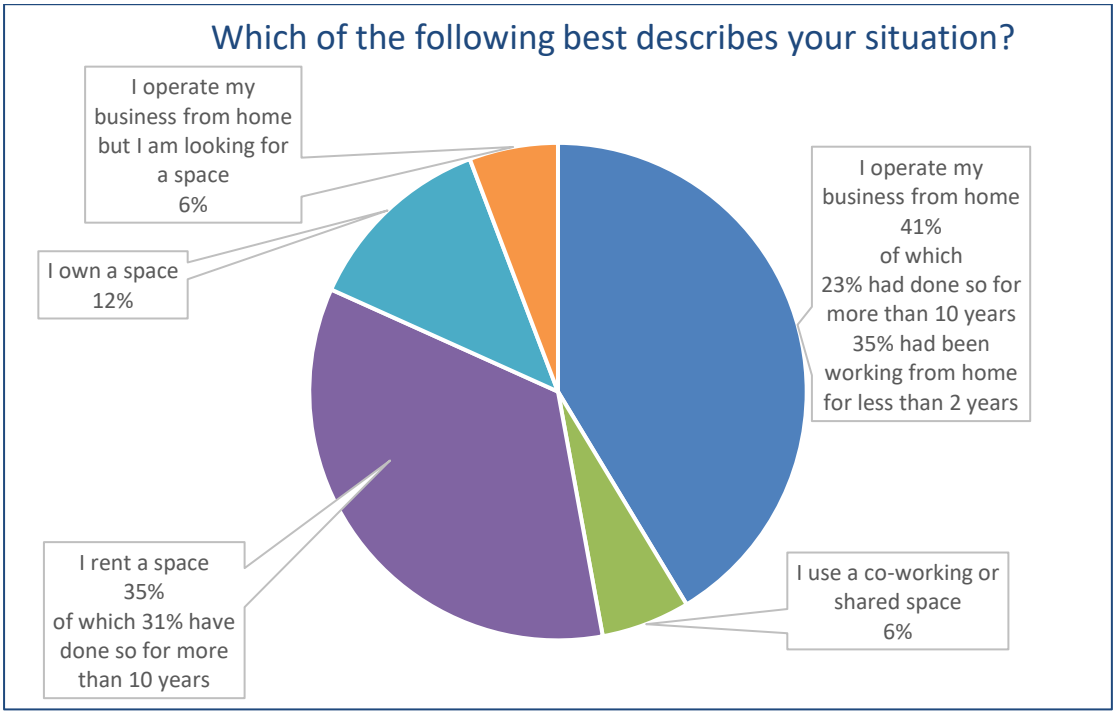
104 business owners responded, and this is what they told us...

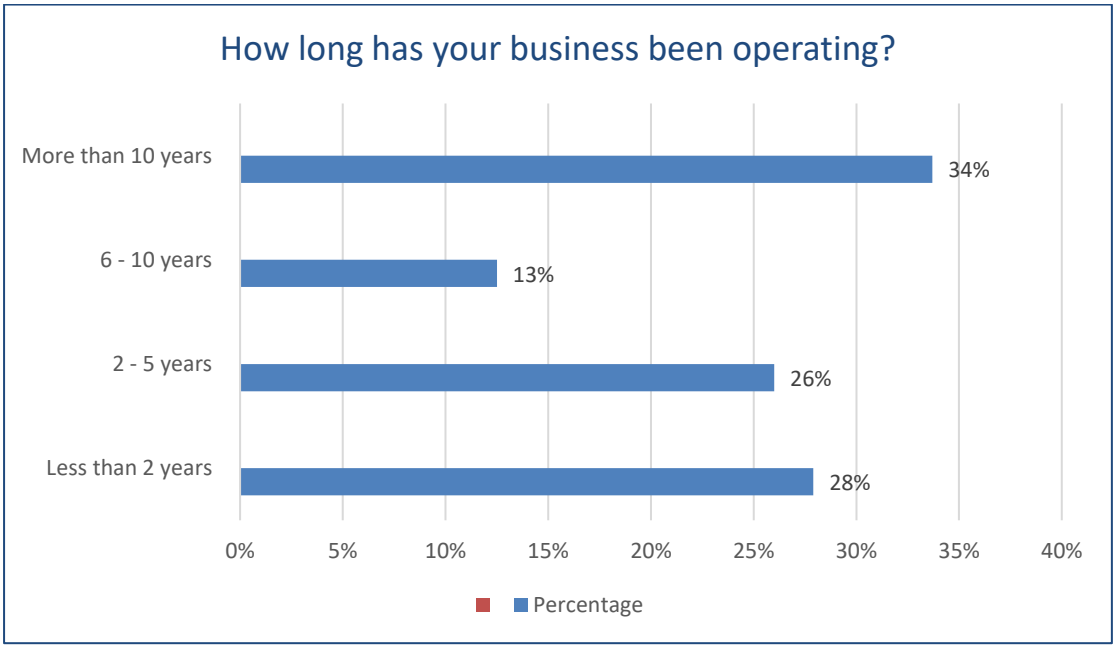
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About Businesses in the City of Charles Sturt

From our 104 responses 41% of business owners told us they operated their businesses from home, 35% rented a space.

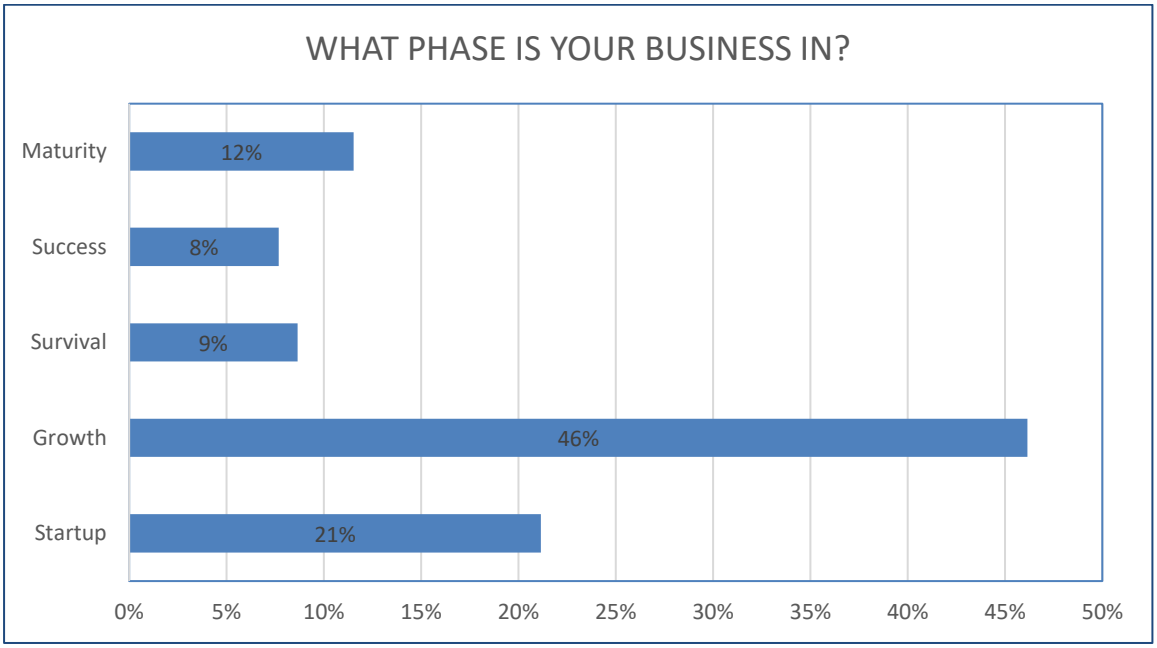
Of the businesses operating from home...
23% had done so for more than 10 years, 35% for less than 2 years.





GROWTH

46% of business owners told us they were in '**growth'** phase, of which half expected to increase their staffing numbers in the next 12 months.



Definitions	
Startup	You are focused on obtaining customer and figuring out your business model that allows for a sustainable cashflow.
Growth	You are focused on growth and how to finance this whilst remaining profitable, alongside hiring staff to facilitate growth.
Survival	You have an established customer base and are focused on generating enough cashflow to stay in business.
Success	You are able to return an above average profit and are considering whether to keep the business stable and profitable or whether to expand.
Maturity	You are focused on consolidating and controlling the financial gains from your business growth phase. Revenue is steady safe and predictable.

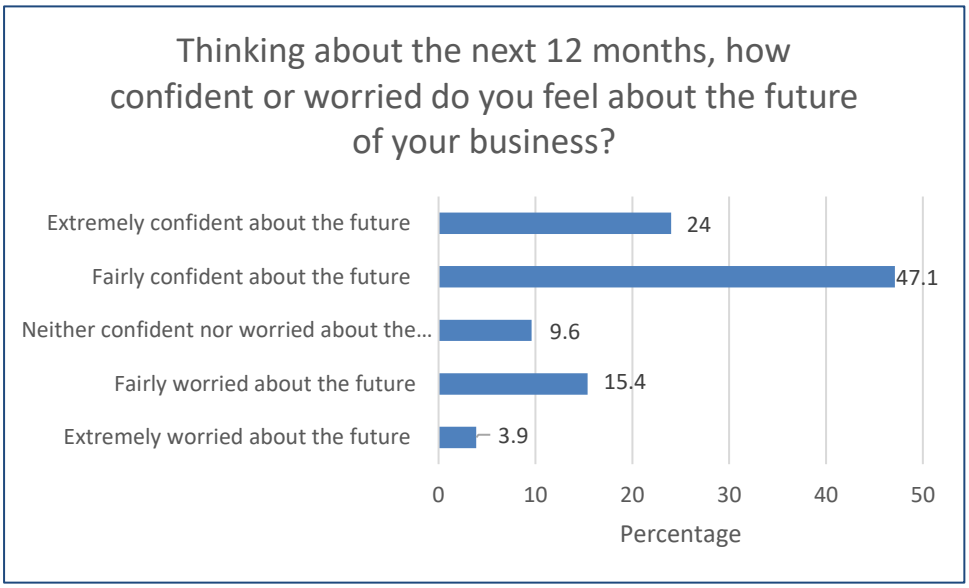
Overall, almost 92% of business owners expected staffing numbers to either stay the same or increase.
Less than 1% expected to be making reductions whilst the remaining respondents were unsure.

How many staff does your business employ?

How many staff does your business employ?	Home-based	Rent	Own a space	Co-work or share	Home but looking for a space	Total
Non-employing	31	2	3	0	0	36
1 to 5	12	3	18	3	4	40
6 to 19	0	1	11	7	1	20
20 to 199	0	0	4	3	1	8
200+	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**43**	**36**	**13**	**6**	**6**	104

Business Confidence and Performance

Looking forward, 71% of the businesses surveyed were feeling positive about the future of their business but looking back over the last 12 months said that business profitability had been mixed.



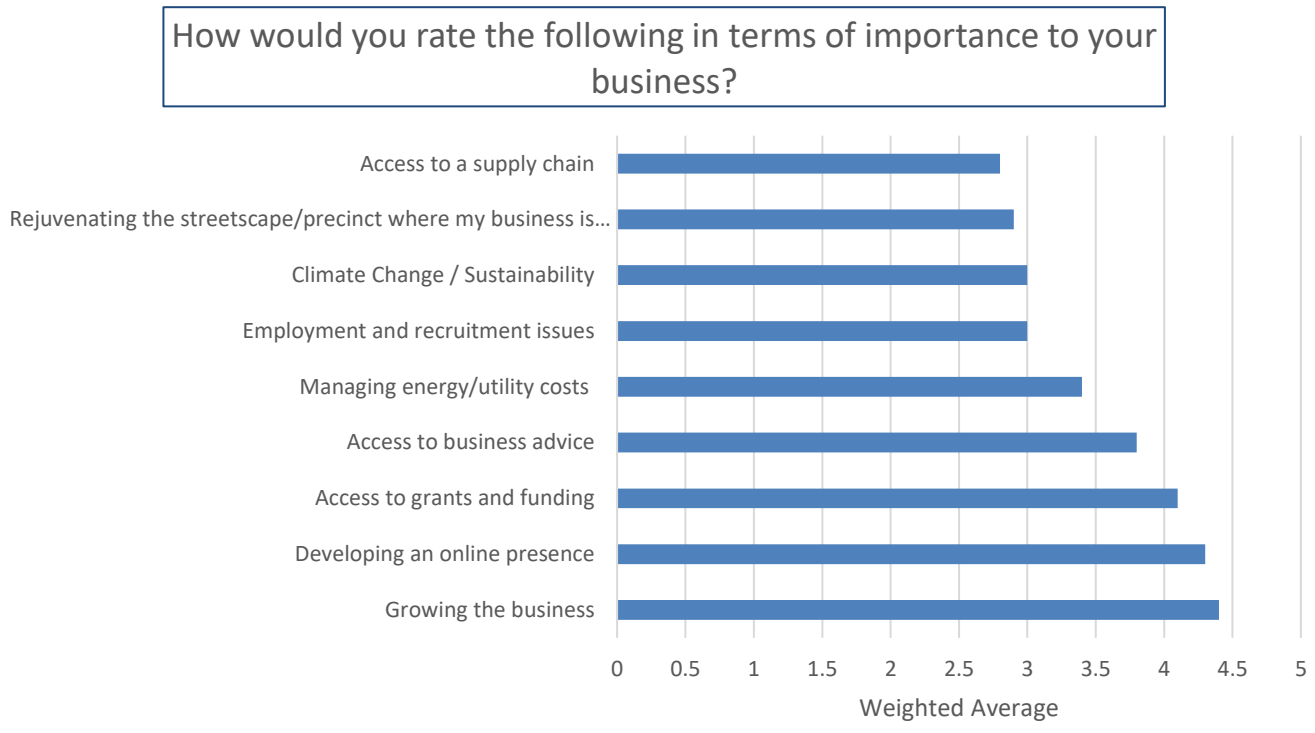
Over the last 12 months would you say that your business profitability has been..	
Excellent	6.7%
Very good	13.5%
Good	27.9%
Fair	30.8%
Poor	14.4%
Please feel free to comment	6 comments

Several respondents told us that they were in start-up phase so it would be some time before they broke even. Others told us that they were working long hours to break even and hadn't paid themselves as they should.

What is important to your business?

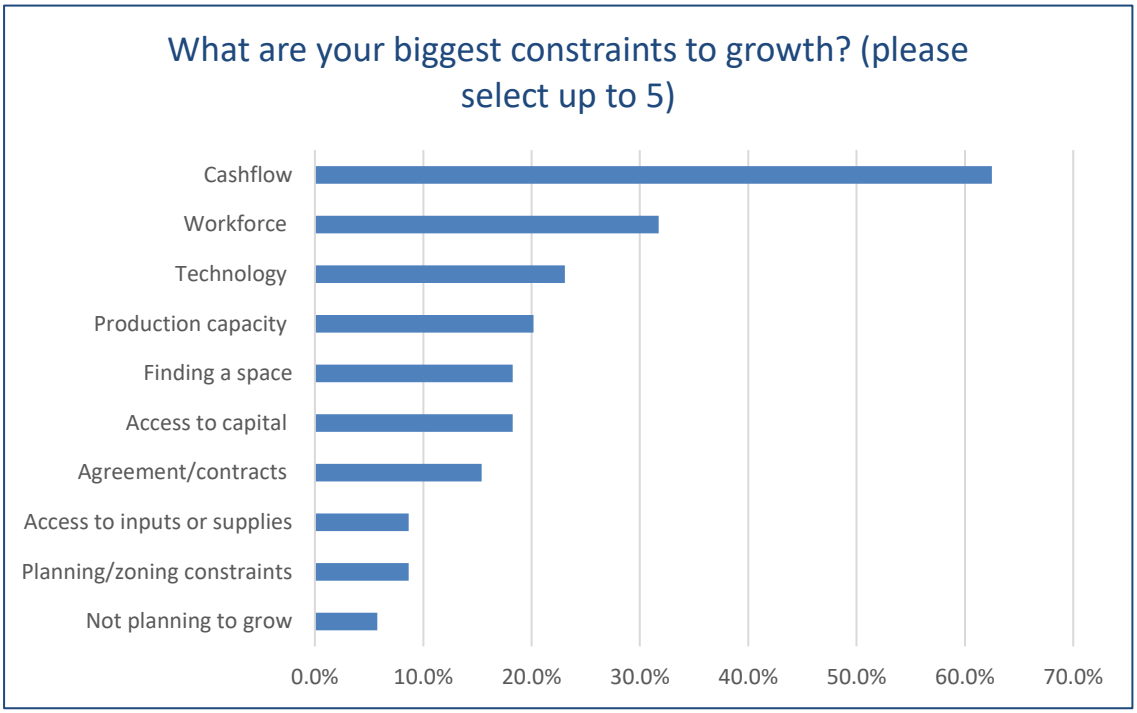
Growing the business, developing an online presence, access to business advice, grants and funding and managing energy costs were important to business.
These priorities are the same as those identified in 2023 and 2024.

Employment and recruitment issues were considered less important than previous years.



However, businesses looking to grow ranked 'workforce' high when asked what their biggest constraints to growth were:

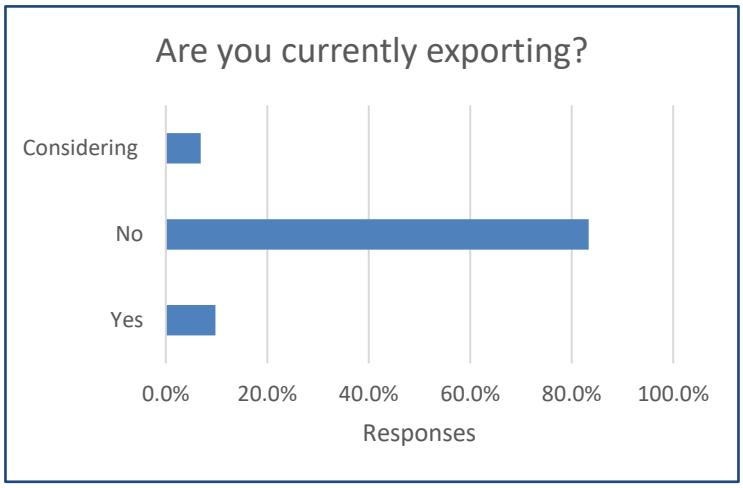
1. Cashflow
2. Workforce
3. Technology
4. Production Capacity
5. Access to space/ Finding a space was considered equally important

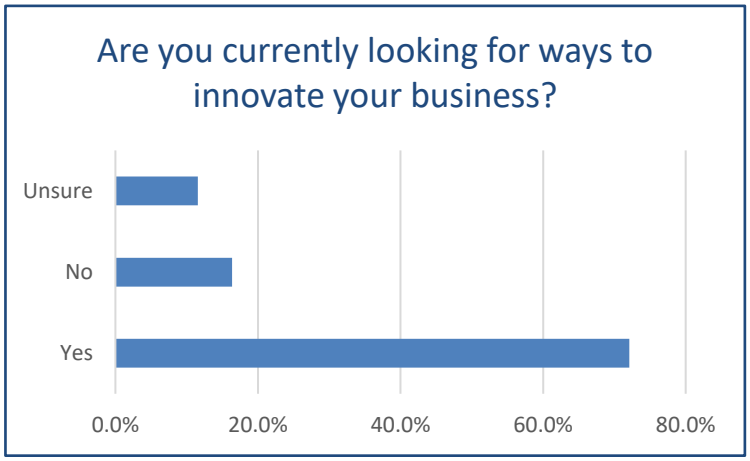


Business also told us that other constraints to growth included….

- Increasing their visibility, developing a stronger market presence and marketing
- Building a client base
- Compliance and Government policies
- Time and business knowledge

What is important to your business



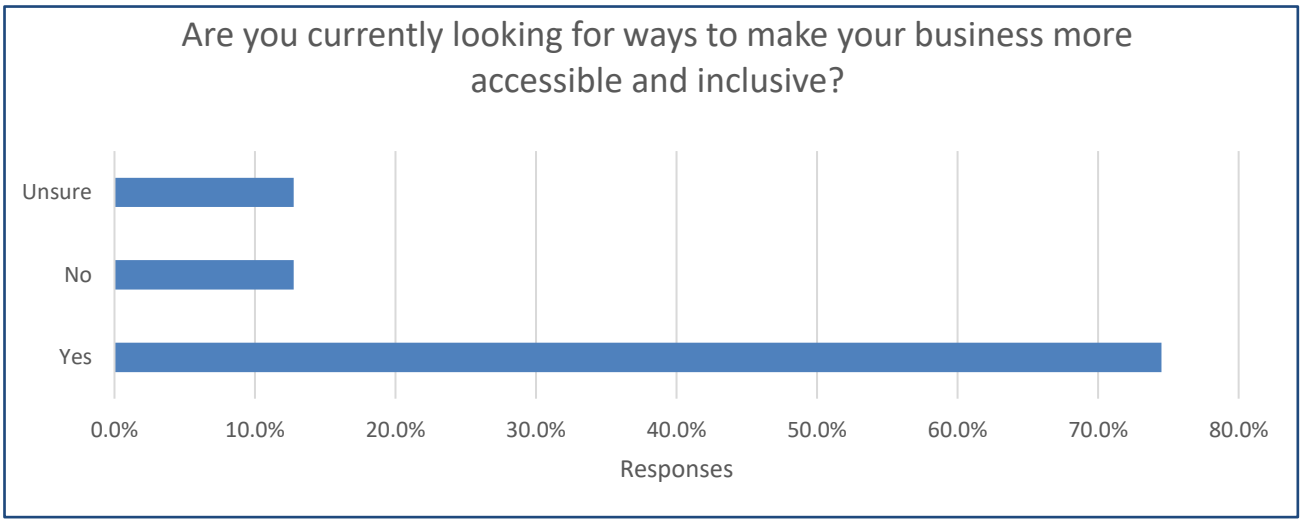


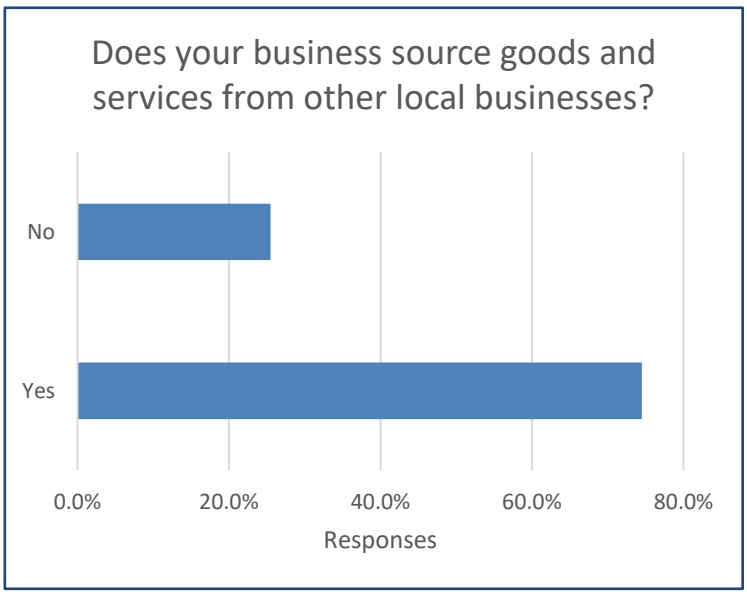
Less than 10% of the business surveyed were currently exporting however a further 5% were considering it.

Over 70% of respondents were looking for ways to innovate in their business. This included investigating new technology and online integration as well as incorporating artificial intelligence into their businesses.

What is important to your business?

75% of businesses said they were looking for ways to make their business more accessible and inclusive? (this could be how their customers found them, their website, physical space, workforce)
Several commented on physical access to their businesses whilst others were interested in making their website and social media more accessible.



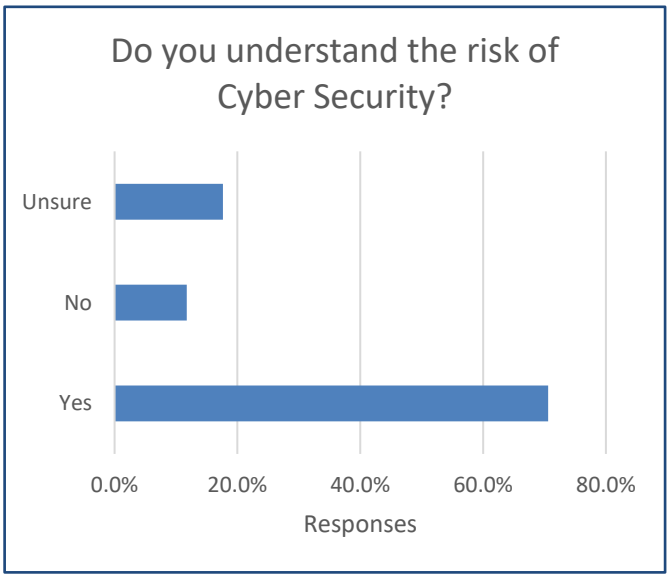


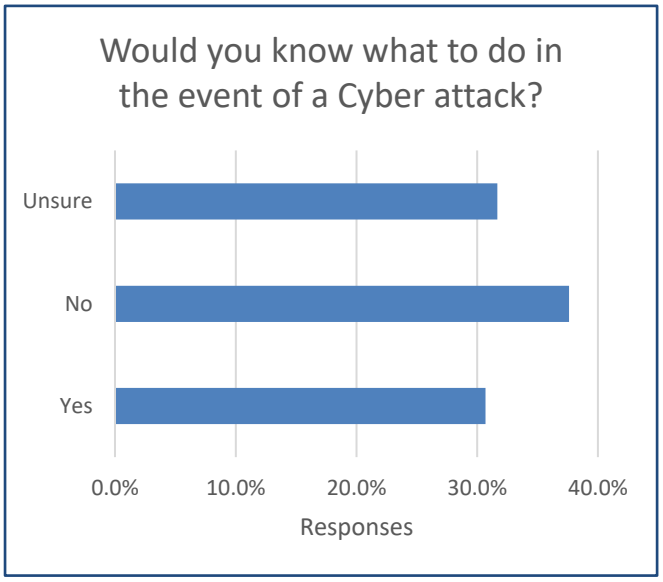
75% of the business surveyed sourced goods and services locally.

You told us, "*you do try to support local wherever you can, and proudly promote local businesses to your international clients*

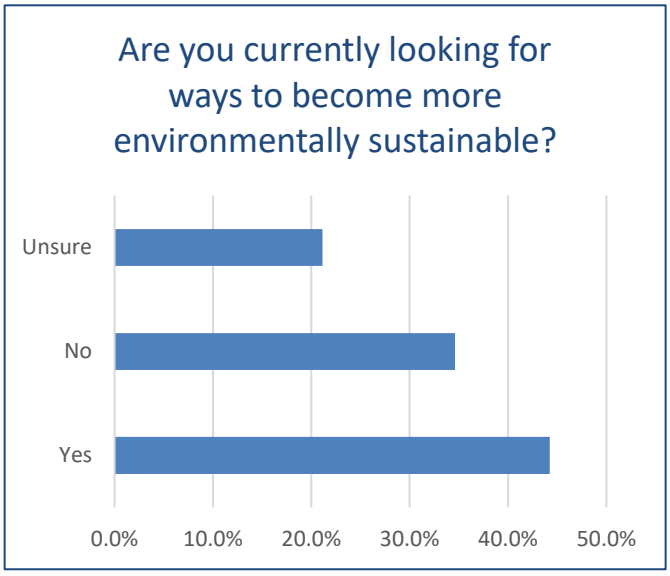
What is important to your business?

72% of our businesses understood the risks of cybersecurity but only 30% knew what to do in the event of an attack.
23% were interested in training and upskilling their staff in in this area.





Are you currently looking for ways to become more environmentally sustainable?

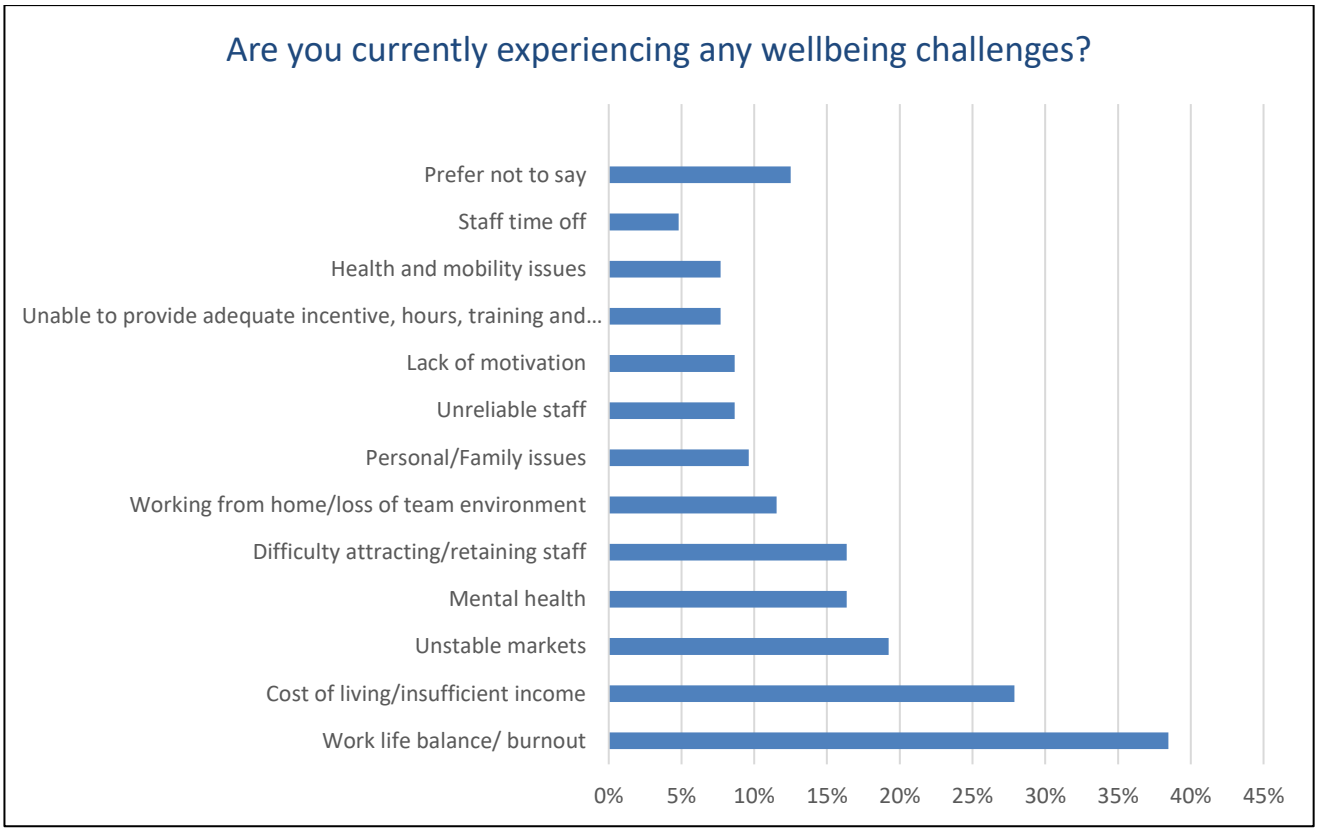


44% of the business surveyed were looking at their environmental options including waste reduction and going paperless.

Many of you were considering solar but had concerned about the investment as you were currently leasing.

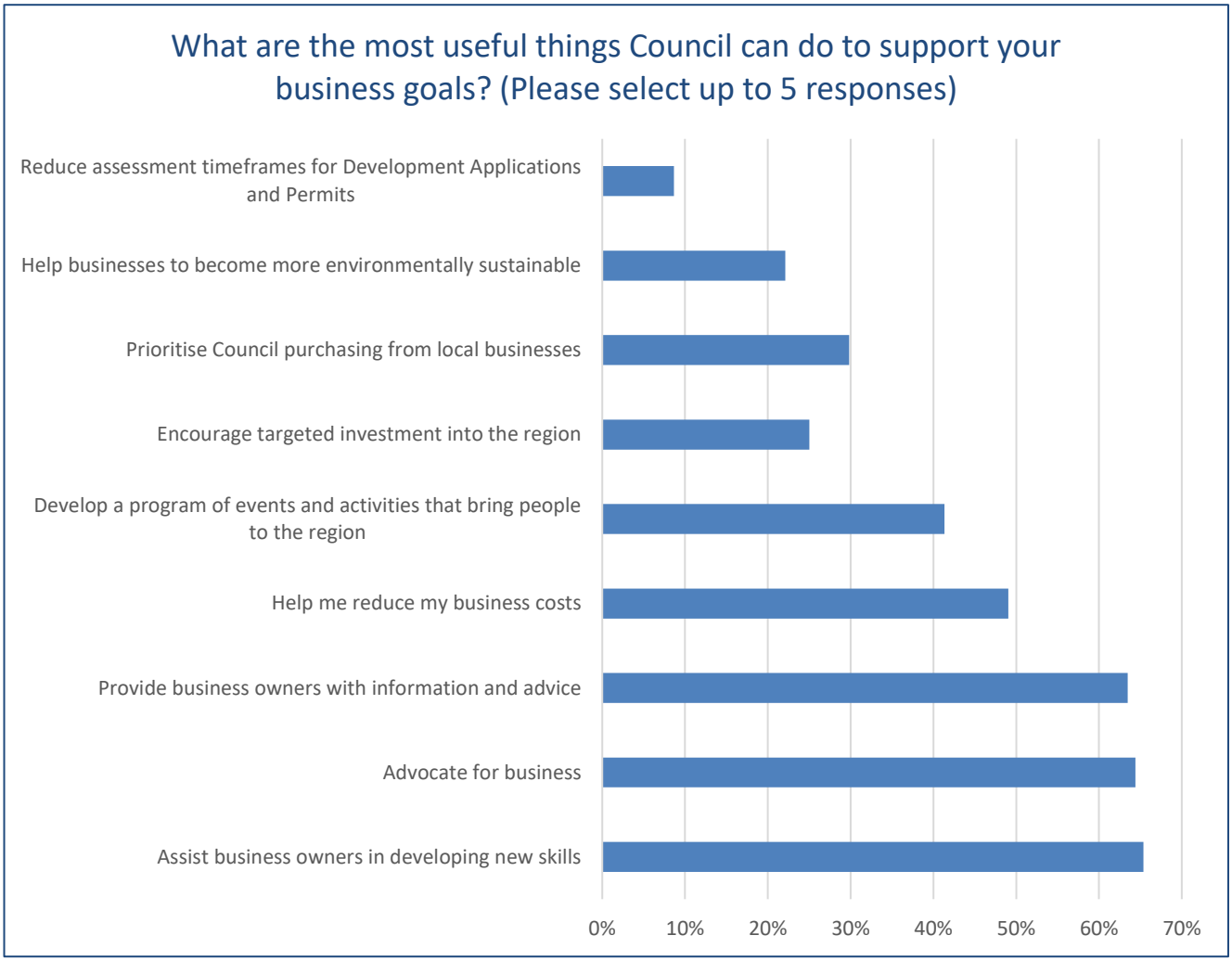
Wellbeing

Our business owners are struggling with mental health issues finding their work life balance, burnout and the cost of living a real challenge.



How Council can help?

When asked how Council could help businesses the top 5 answers were; assist them with developing new skills, advocate for them, provide information and advice, help them to reduce their business costs and attract people to the region through events.



Additional responses	Number of comments
More promotion	21
More networking and B2B opportunities	16
Skills development	13
Grants	7
Buy Local	6
General – creating hubs, beautifying the streetscape, parking, waste	

60% of businesses were aware of the grants available to support local businesses, artists and venues.

89% of businesses were aware of the Western Business Leaders, a group set up to support the City of Charles Sturt business community.



When asked were there any other workshops or topics they would like to see covered in the next 12 months, 58% of businesses selected digital marketing. This figure has remained consistently high over the previous years.

Businesses also requested workshops on:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Financial planning, cashflow forecasting and budgeting
- Sales and marketing
- Mental health tools
- Developing business to business connections

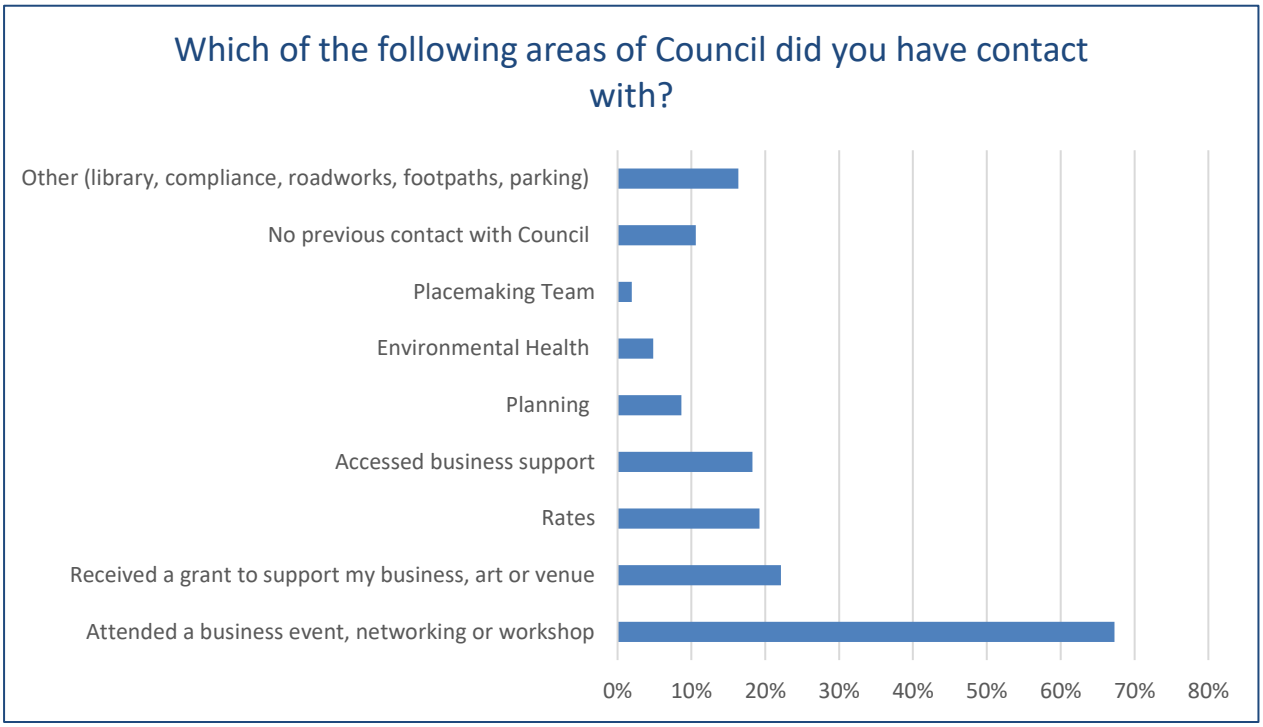
Our businesses have continued to enjoy masterclasses and one to one support…

How do you prefer to receive business support?	Responses		
	2023	2024	2025
Masterclasses/events/workshops	54%	67%	69%
One-to-one continued support (e.g. working with a business advisor or mentor)	40%	58%	60%
Online	71%	52%	53%
Not applicable	4%	3%	4%
Total respondents	76	102	104

Working with the City of Charles Sturt Council

104 businesses responded that they had been in contact with Council in the last two years of which 85 shared that their experience working with us was good, very good or excellent.

2 respondents rated their experiences as 'fair', these related to unclear website information, staff knowledge and not receiving a return email or phone call. .

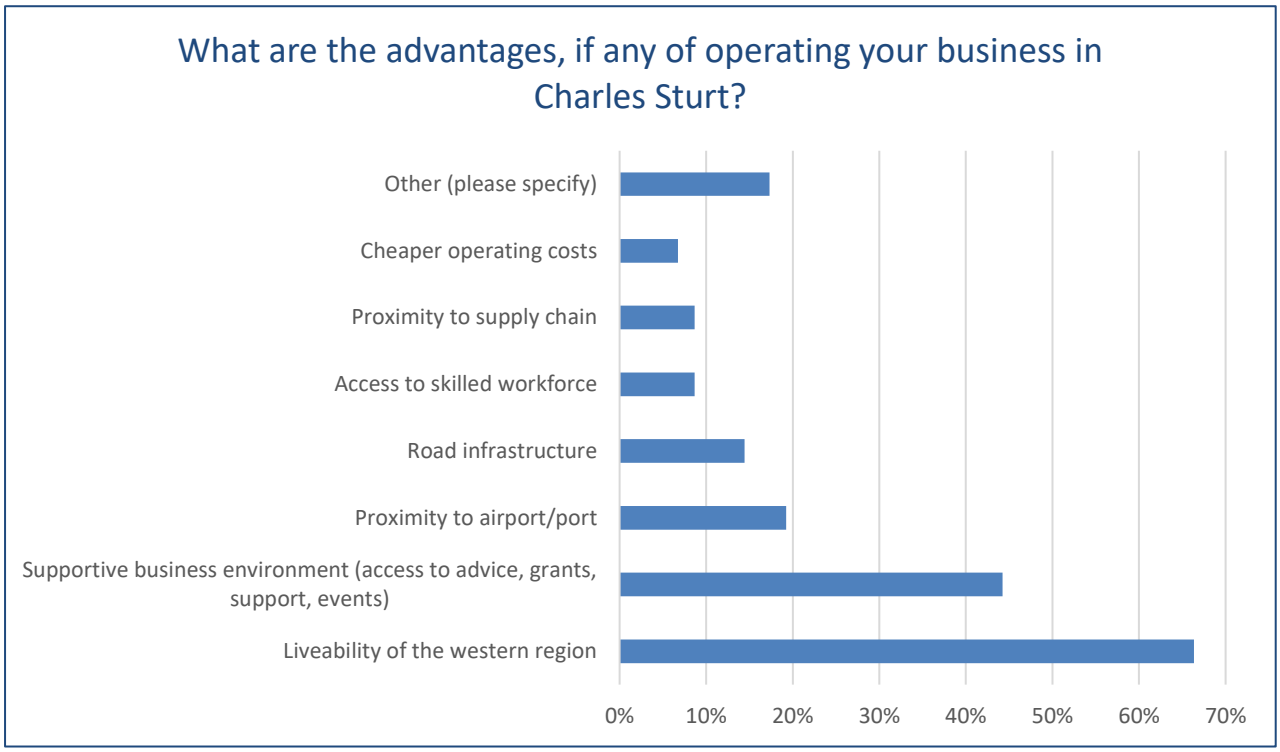


How was your experience working with us?	
Excellent	43.3%
Very good	30.8%
Good	7.7%
Fair	3.9%
Poor	1.9%
Not applicable (hadn't worked with	10.6%
Please feel free to leave a comment	2 responses
	Answered 104

Doing business in the City of Charles Sturt

66% of businesses responded that **liveability** is what they loved about doing business in the Western Region.

Those that selected 'other' told us that the community and the central location were other reasons for doing business here.



54% of business respondents couldn't think of any disadvantages of doing business in the City of Charles Sturt compared to 83% in 2023 and 61% in 2024.

7 business told us that our City was becoming expensive and rent, and rates were high

We also received individual comments about…

- Impact from construction works and streetscape upgrades
- Lack of flexibility and tedious processes in Council
- Being unable to find staff
- Not being close to key clients based in Adelaide
- Poor footpaths and the general streetscape,

When asked if you could change one thing or solve one problem in your local community to improve the business environment, what would that be?



Council initiatives to support businesses

- Provide a Business Support Grant Program providing funding for advisors to help business owners develop new skills, adapt, innovate and grow.
- Host workshops on marketing, winning grants and tenders and accessing capital and cashflow.
- Provide a program of events and workshops through the Western Business Leaders and Women in the West to develop skills and facilitate business to business networking opportunities.
- Provide the Events and Festivals sponsorship program and Live & Local funding to attract events to the region.
- Support and promote precinct activation through events, local promotions, and art.
- Promote businesses through the Western Business Leaders newsletter, the Charles Sturt Business Facebook page and Adelaide Beaches website and social media.
- Continue to promote local businesses through major events in the region such as LIV Golf.
- Continue to promote tourism through Western Adelaide Tourism Alliance and Adelaide Beaches.
- Continue to share economic data that helps to inform future business planning.
- Collaborate with organisations such as Responsible Cafes and Shinehub to help businesses become more sustainable and reduce costs.
- Promote Council tender opportunities to local businesses.
- Continue to host events such as the Western Adelaide Jobs Expo 2025 and more targeted workshops to connect businesses with job seekers.
- Host the City of Charles Sturt Business Awards in 2026.
- Continue to advocate for businesses at all levels of Government.