

BUSINESS CLIMATE SURVEY 2022

A huge thank you to everyone who has responded to our Business Climate Survey. **156** responses were received to our business survey (92.3% of these were from businesses located across the City) from **66** different sectors.

Earlier this year we conducted a survey to find out more about the businesses that operate in our city so we asked owners and operators in the City of Charles Sturt to understand how we can better support your business. These results will help us shape the services, program and activities we deliver. The feedback will also inform the content of our 2022-2023 Business Plan and Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026.

About Businesses in the City of Charles Sturt

From our 156 responses, **47%** of business owners worked from home, 38% rented a space, 12% owned their space whilst 3% used a co-working or shared space.

41% of businesses had been operating in the area for over 10 years, **16%** between 6-10 years, **23%** between 2--5 years and **20%** of you had been operating for less than 2 years.

Employees & working from home.

38% of businesses did not employ anyone, **57% had 1-19 employees** whilst 5% of you had 20-199 employees and only 1% employed over 200 staff.

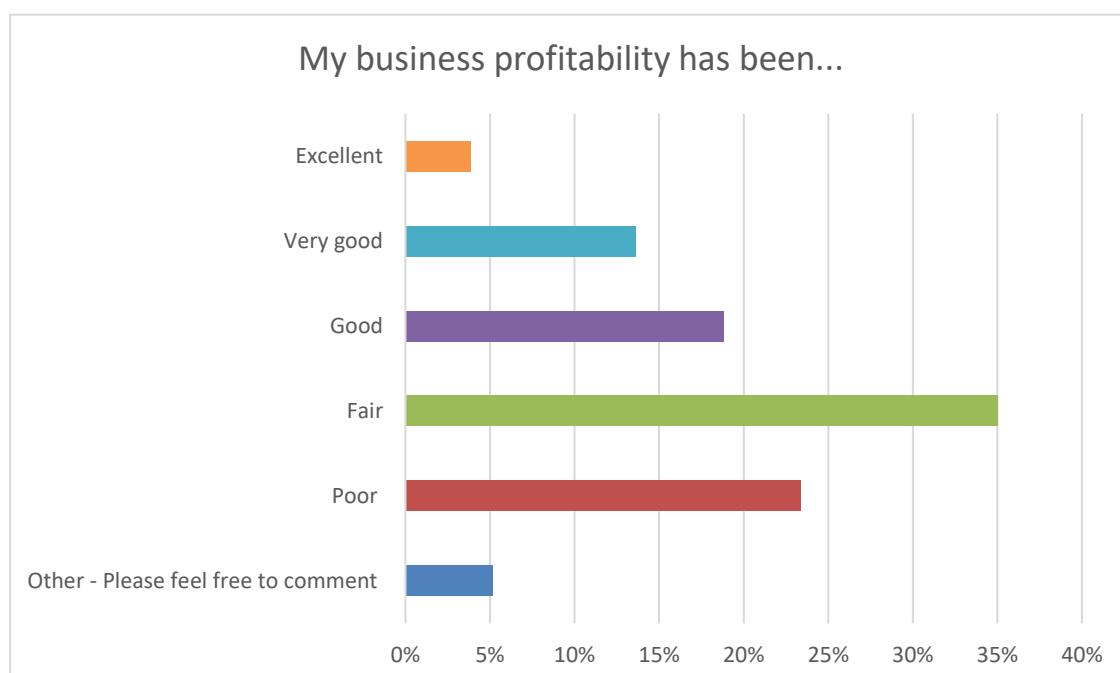
Responses indicated that **51%** of businesses expected staff numbers to stay the same, 38% were looking to grow however 14% expected staffing numbers to decrease or were unsure.

51% of businesses supported people working from home and 13% were thinking about it but didn't have a plan yet. The remaining businesses were aiming for staff to return to the business premises or told us that working from home was not possible for the business or was not supported.

Those business owners that supported staff working from home, felt that health and wellbeing and work life balance had improved.

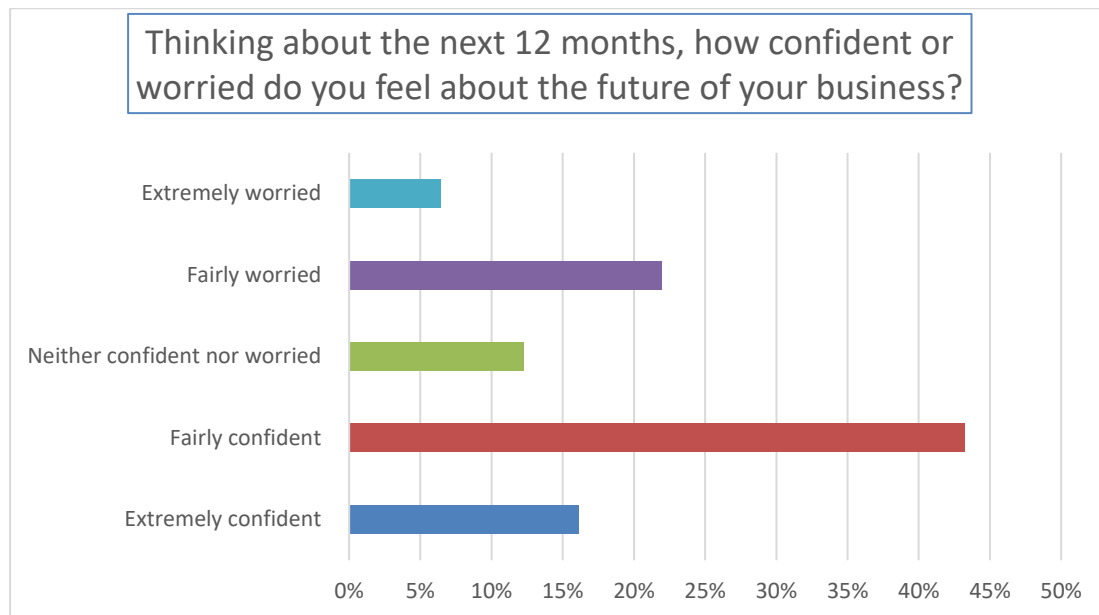
Business Confidence

Looking back on the last 12 months –58% of businesses told us that COVID-19 had taken its toll on their profitability, several provided comments that COVID restrictions had made growing a small business challenging.



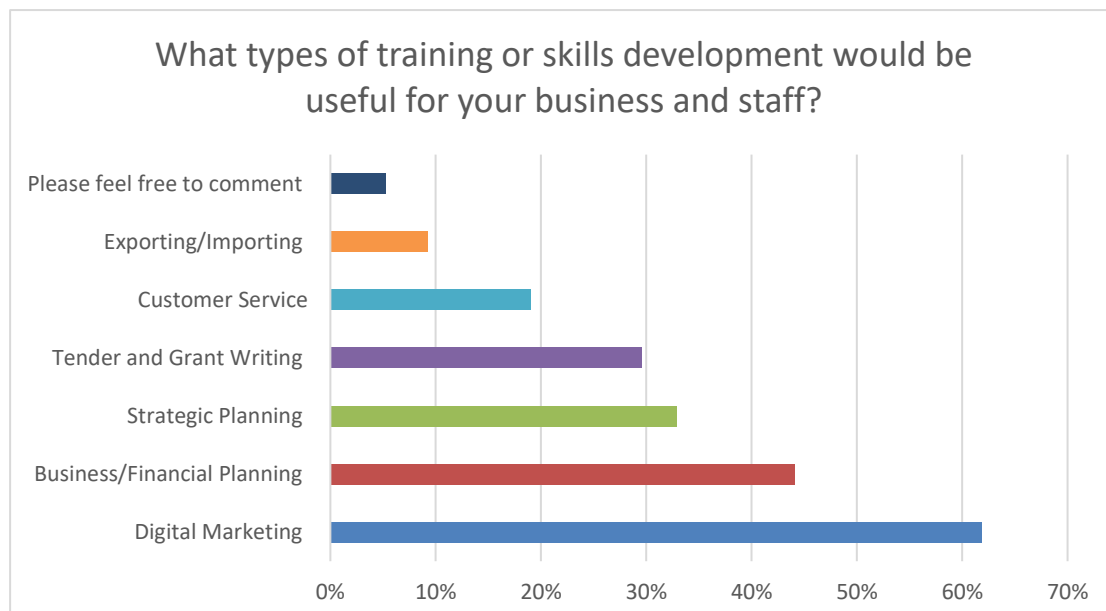
Looking to the future

60% businesses were confident about the future of their business in the City of Charles Sturt. However, **28%** of respondents were worried about the future of their business and put it down to several factors including the ever-changing covid environment, rent stress, construction and roadworks interference, supply chain issues and/or shipping costs.



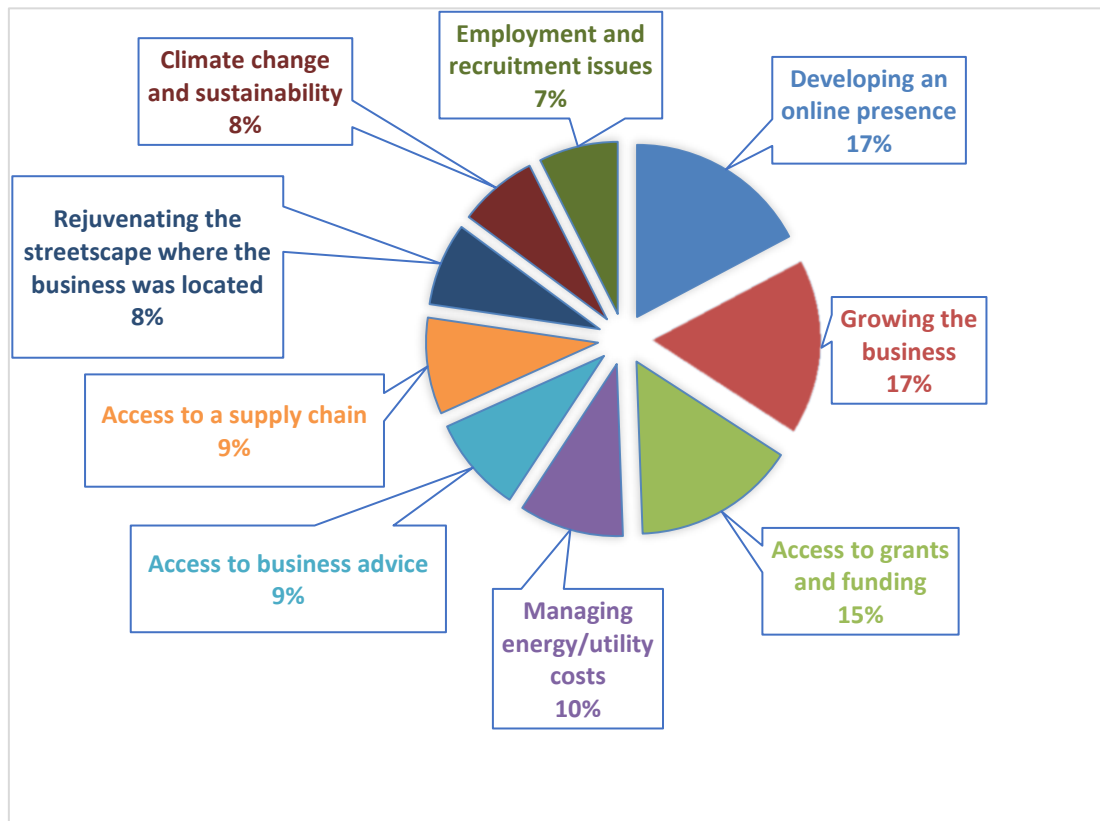
What is important to your business?

Digital marketing, business, financial and strategic planning as well as learning to tender and grant writing were highlighted as useful for businesses and staff, delivered through a mixture of online learning, events, workshops and masterclasses and one to one support.



Developing an online presence, growing the business and access to grants and funding were considered extremely important for our business community, however, only **54% were aware of the grants that Council offered.**

How would you rate the following in terms of importance to your business?



Innovation - 66.5% of respondents were looking for ways to innovate in the business, mainly through investing in an online presence, streamlining practices and searching for continuous improvement strategies & ideas for growth.

Sustainability - 53% of respondents were looking for ways to become more environmentally friendly. These included:

- Achieving net zero through improvements and offsets
- Recycling, reducing packaging/creating new sustainable packaging for online sales
- Energy efficiency/ Solar power
- Going paperless
- Hybrid vehicles



Mayor Angela Evans, City of Charles Sturt and Leigh Gapp, Sustainability Manager at Adelaide

Local Supply Chain - 76% of respondents sourced goods and services from other local businesses.

Exporting - 94% of respondents were not exporting, however 2.5% were considering it but needed support.

Working with Council

76% of respondents had previous contact with Council and 68% had a good, very good or excellent experience working with us, 17% was not applicable and 11% had a fair or poor experience. Only 54% were aware of the grants that Council offered and 61% were aware of the Western Business Leaders group.

When asked how Council could support business goals, the top five responses were:

1. Provide business owners with information and advice
2. Advocate to state and federal government for more funding
3. Assist business owners in developing new skills
4. Help to reduce business costs
5. Help businesses become more environmentally sustainable



It was felt that Council should prioritise purchasing from local business and businesses would like to see a program of events and activities developed that bring people to the region.



Western Adelaide Tourism Networking event, November 2021.



Growing your Home Based Business event, March 2022

Businesses would also like:

- Assistance and advice with online marketing and promotion
- Local businesses to be promoted
- A local business directory
- Access to Council networks and contacts to facilitate marketing
- Discounts to be applied to council charges for businesses who have been restricted to trade during COVID-19.
- Road works to be scheduled at non-peak periods of the year
- Council organised community events that include local businesses
- Small business (sole trader) networking opportunities



NDIS Provider networking event March 2022 at the Healthy Living Precinct, Welland.



Selma Barlow, Coordinator Economic Development, City of Charles Sturt at a NDIS Provider networking event March 2022.

Being a part of the City of Charles Sturt.

Advantages of operating in the City of Charles Sturt

70% of respondents stated that liveability was the main advantage of operating a business in our city. Comments received showed that it is a supportive business environment. Our central location and good transport links which allowed access to markets were also widely commented on.

Disadvantages of operating in the City of Charles Sturt

Comments were made in relation to parking, rubbish, lengthy developments, limited public transport and drug & alcohol issues.

If you could change one thing or solve one problem, what would it be?

