

The City of Charles Sturt Business Survey 2023 Results

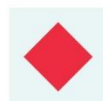


The City of Charles Sturt Business Survey 2023

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.

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

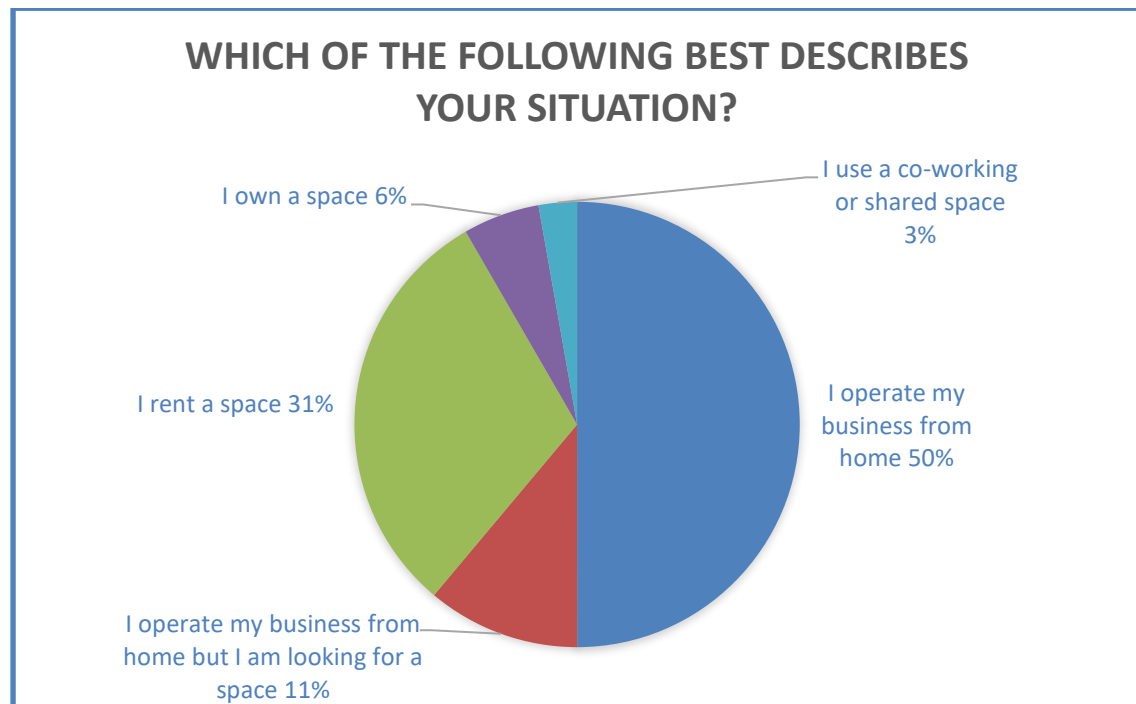


About Businesses in the City of Charles Sturt

From our 72 responses 50% of business owners told us they operated their businesses from home.

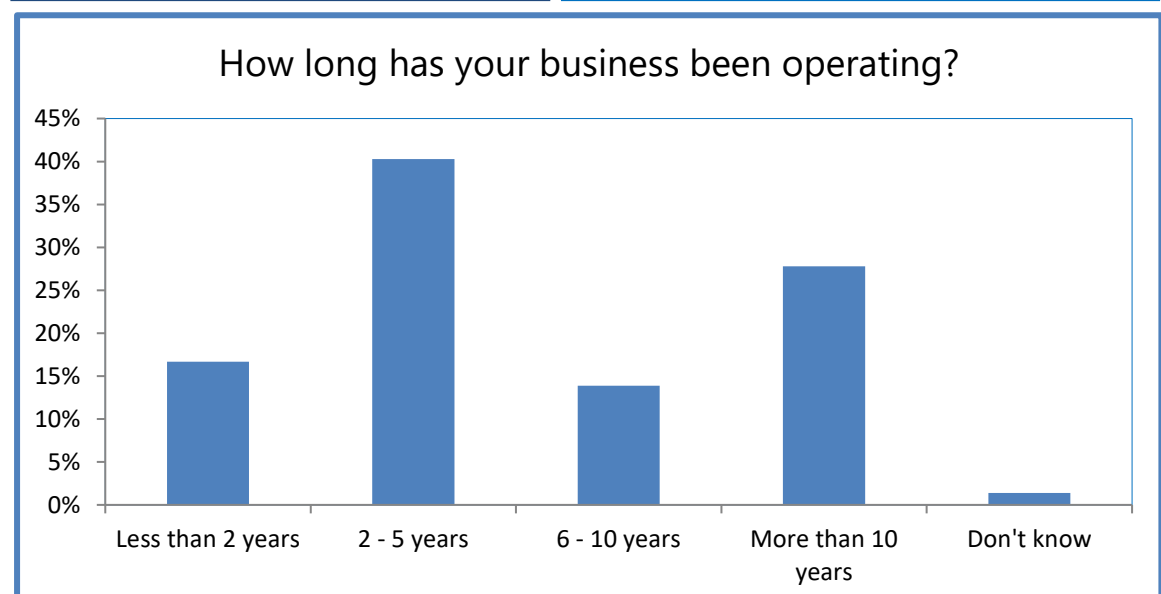
25% of the businesses operating from home had been doing so for less than 2 years and were non-employing.

30% had been operating from home for 2-5 years, over half of these employed 2-5 staff. The remainder had been operating from home between 6-10 years with 4 businesses working this way for more than 10 years.

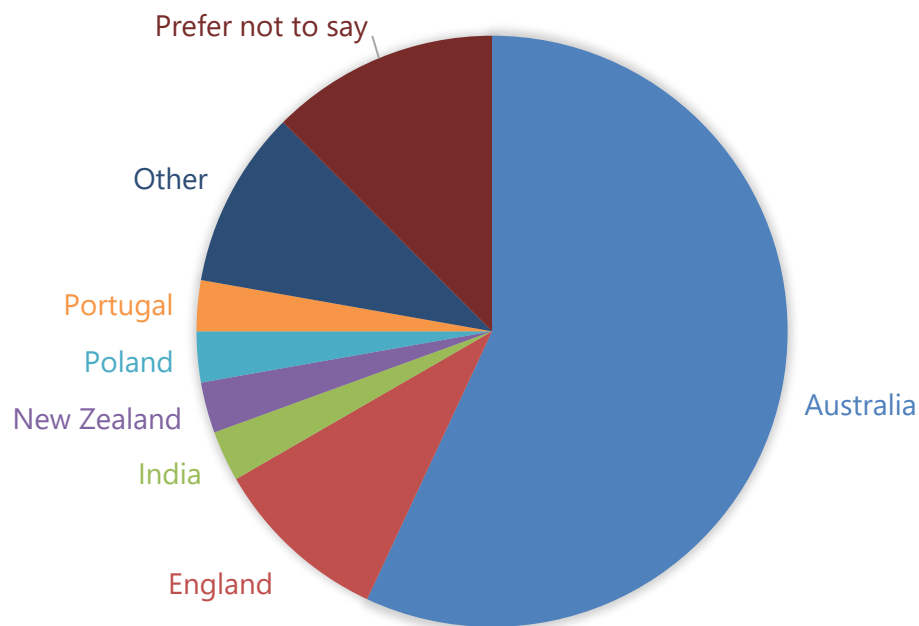


31% of business owners were **not** born in Australia.

40% of respondents had been operating their business for 2–5 years.



Our business owners come from all over the world.

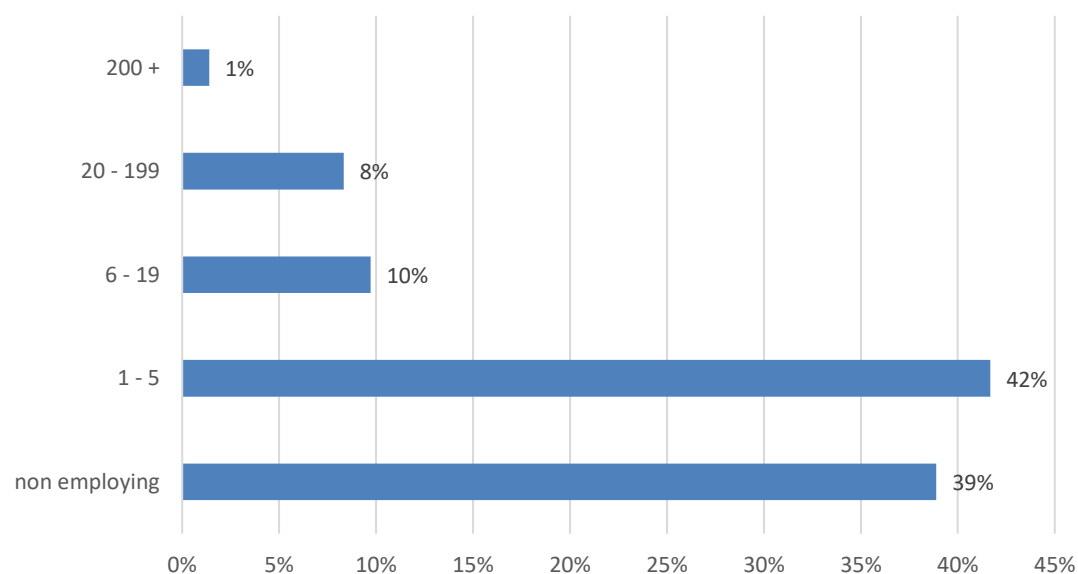


56% of our business owners told us they were born in Australia.

31% told us they were born overseas.

When we asked how many people our businesses employed, most were either non employing or had less than 5 staff.

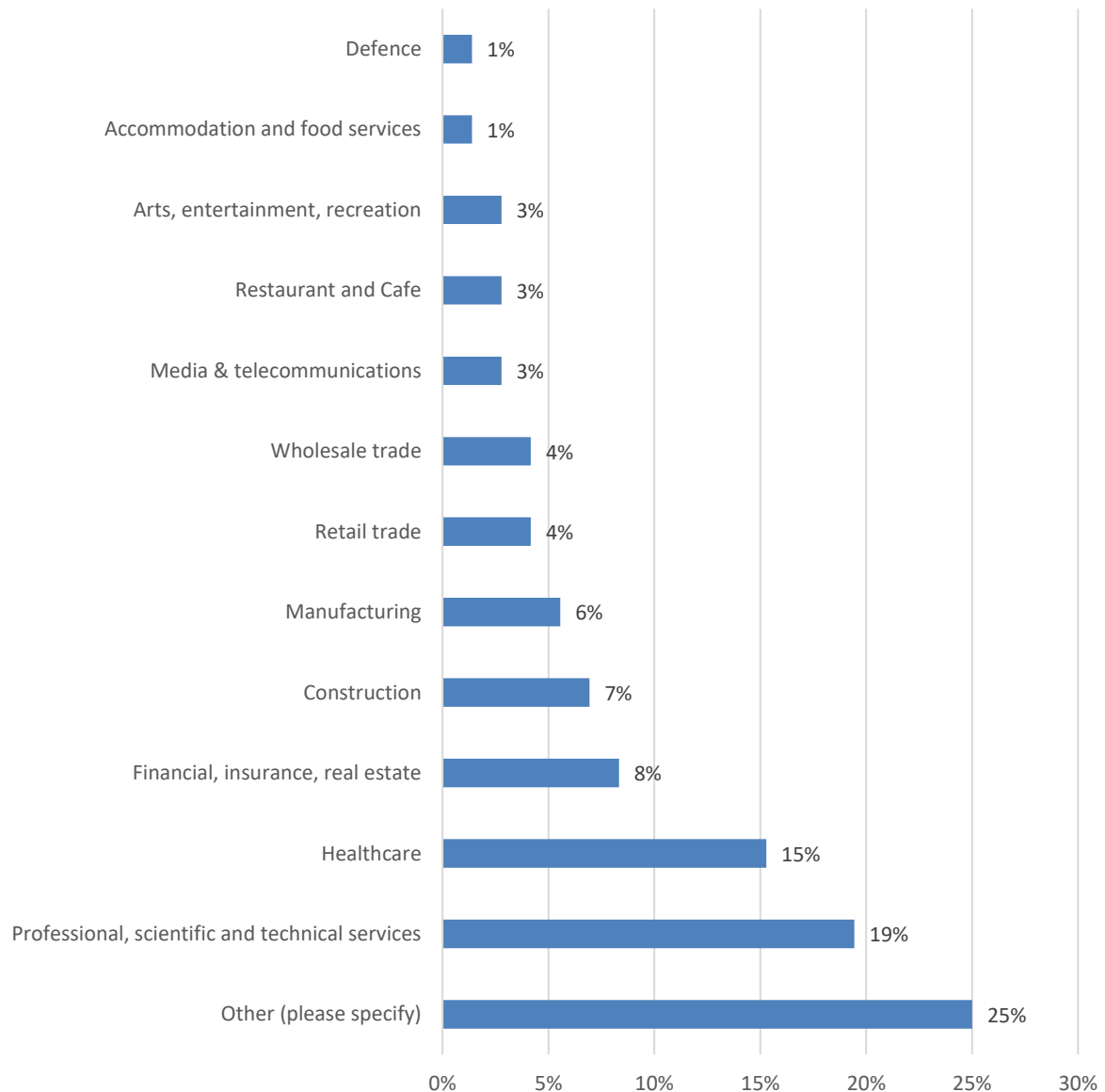
How many staff does your business employ?



This wasn't surprising as South Australia is typically a small business economy.

Responses were received from businesses operating in 18 different sectors.

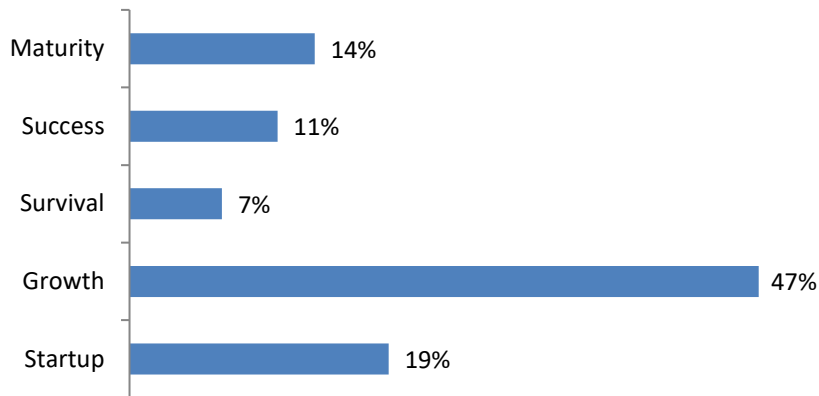
Which sector best describes your industry or main activity?



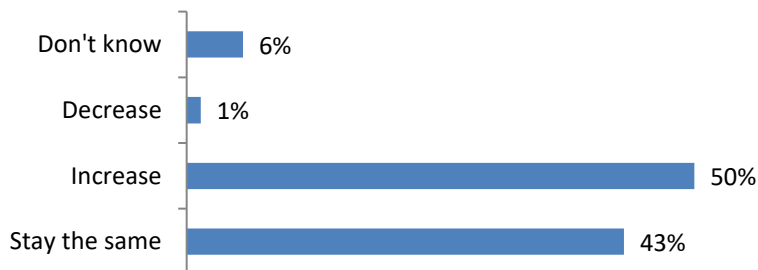
Almost half of our businesses told us they were in '**growth**' phase and were looking to increase staff.

Their biggest constraints to growth were cashflow, workforce, technology, contracts & agreements and access to capital.

What phase is your business in?



What do you expect your staff numbers to do over 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.

Business Confidence and Performance

Looking forward, 72% of the businesses 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	1%	1
Very good	21%	15
Good	29%	21
Fair	28%	20
Poor	14%	10
Please feel free to comment	7%	5
	Answered	72

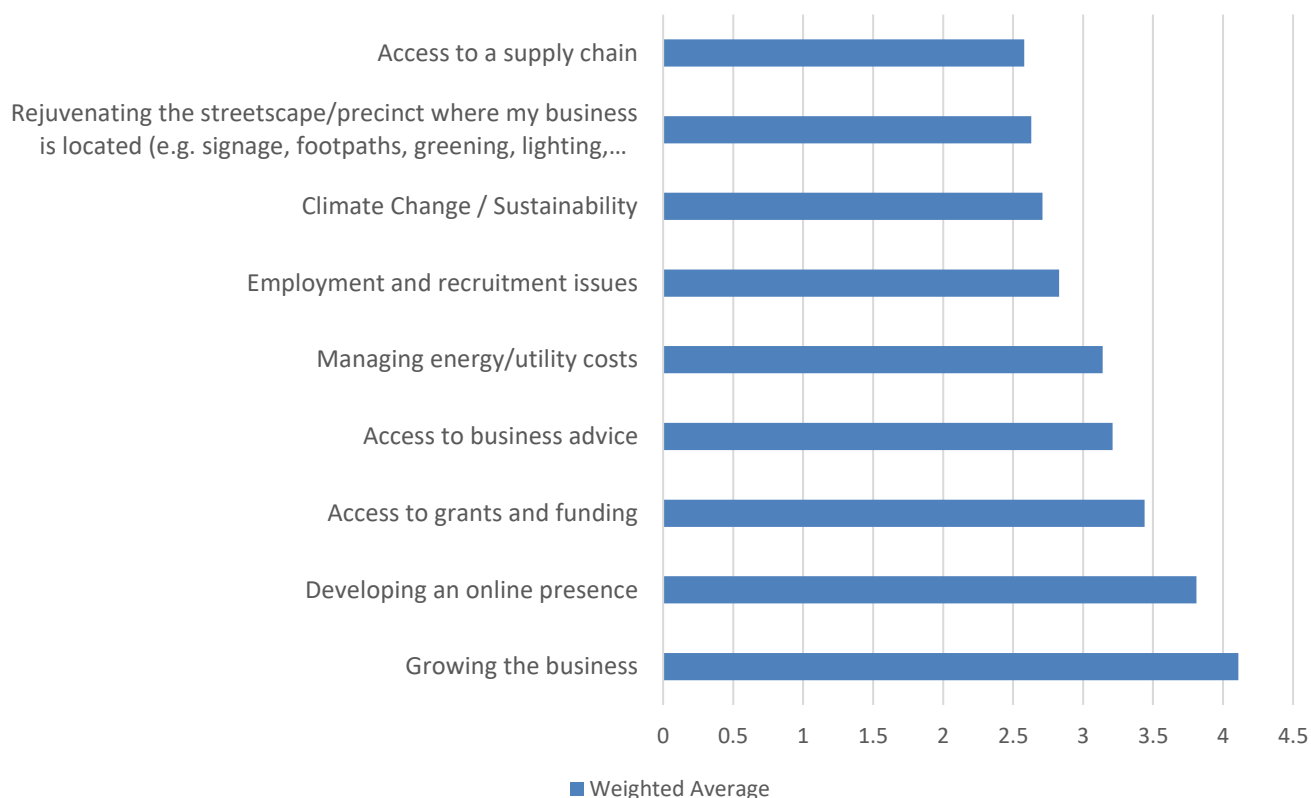
Several respondents told us that they were in start-up phase so it would be some time before they broke even or made a profit.

We then asked our business owners what was important to them and how we could help...

What is important to your business?

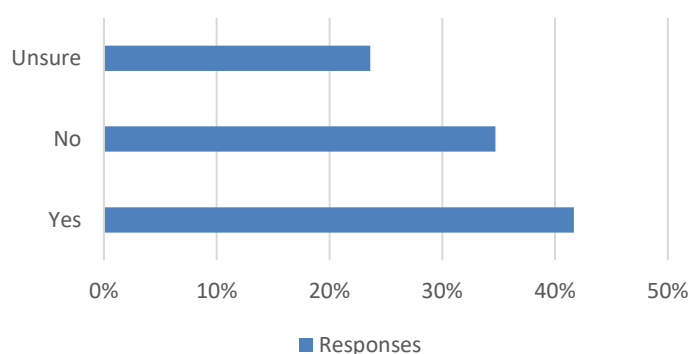
Growing the business, developing an online presence, access to grants, funding and advice and managing energy costs were important to business. These priorities are the same as those identified in 2022.

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



Employment and recruitment issues also ranked highly in 2023 but businesses were unsure about their environmental plans.

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

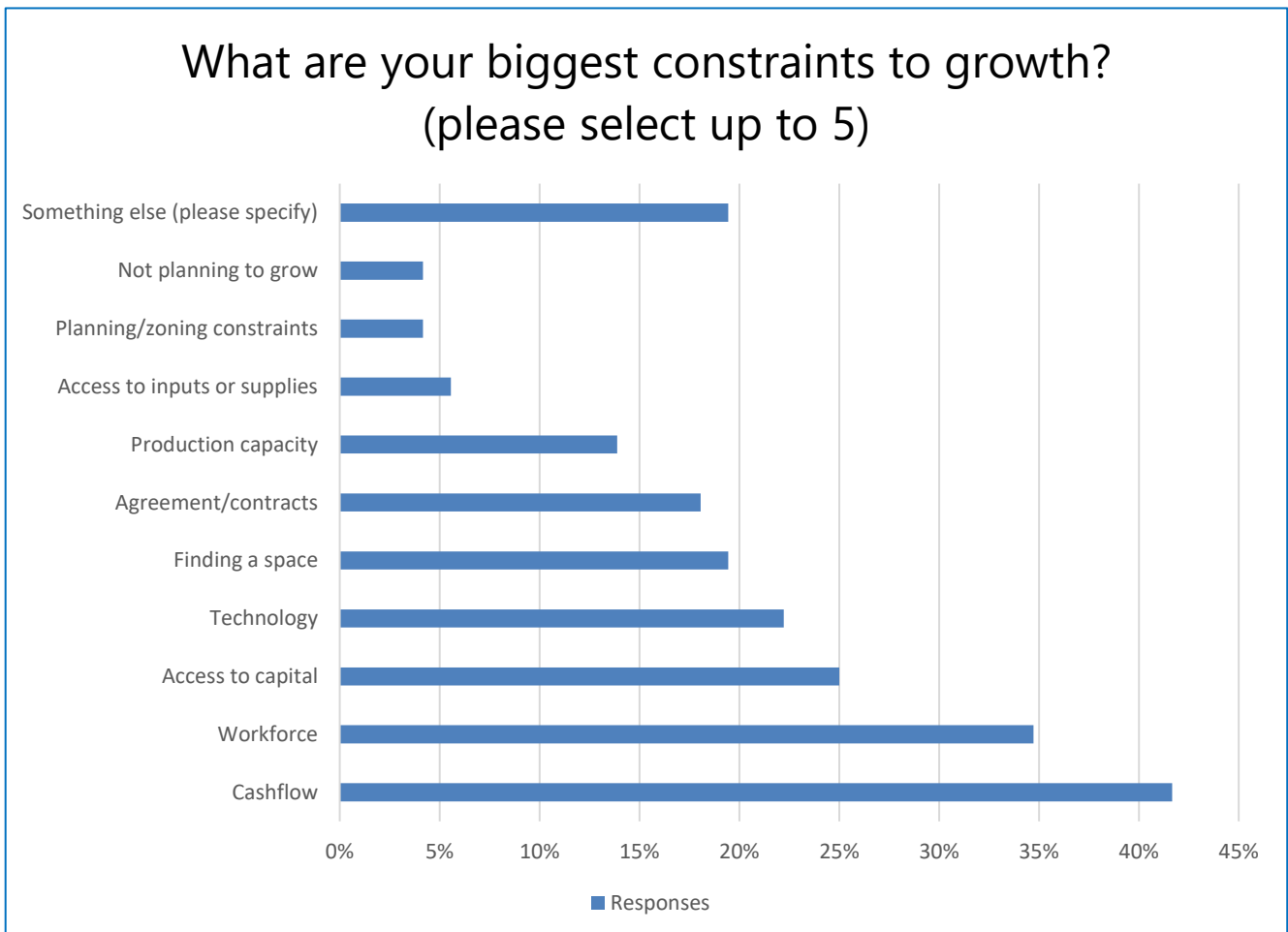


42% of the business surveyed were looking to become more environmentally sustainable. 24% were unsure if this would be part of their plans.

One business owner told us, *"I would love to be able to plant a tree each time I support a client, my little part to help offset carbon"*.

What is important to your business?

40% of business said growing the business was extremely important to them but they identified the following as their biggest constraints to growth...

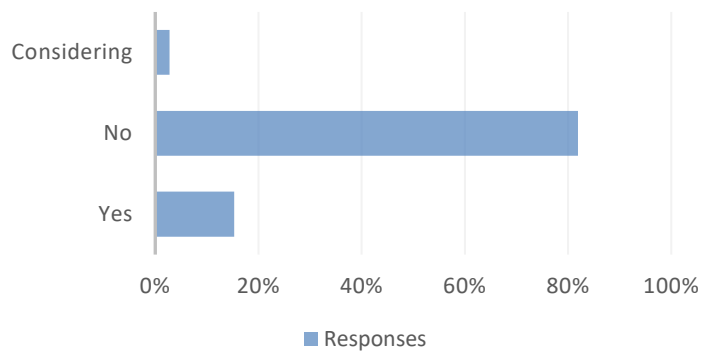


Business also told us that other constraints to growth were....

- Rising rates /consumer confidence/lender policies
- Finding new customers
- Access to buyers
- Mental health
- Marketing
- Brand awareness

What is important to your business?

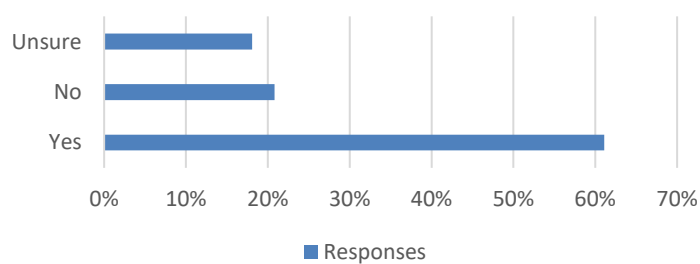
Are you currently exporting?



15% of the business surveyed were currently exporting and a further 3% were considering it.

Those exporting were in healthcare sectors, professional, scientific and technical services, wholesale trade and manufacturing.

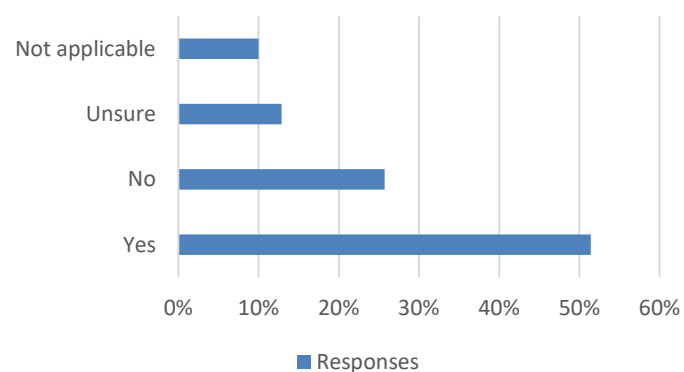
Are you currently looking for ways to innovate your business?



Over 60% of respondents were looking for ways to innovate in their business. This included investigating new technology and online integration and adding new product lines.

Over 50% of businesses said they were looking for ways to make their business more accessible but didn't comment on what they were trying to improve.

Are you currently looking for ways to make your business more accessible?

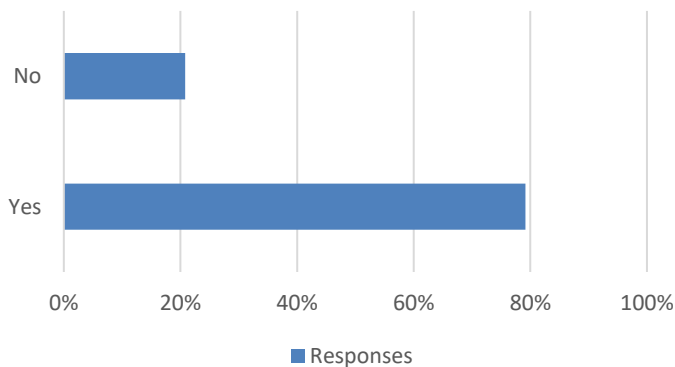


4 businesses said they wanted to improve their online presence and offer online learning platforms.

2 businesses said they would like to become more wheelchair friendly.

What is important to your business?

Does your business source goods and services from other local businesses?

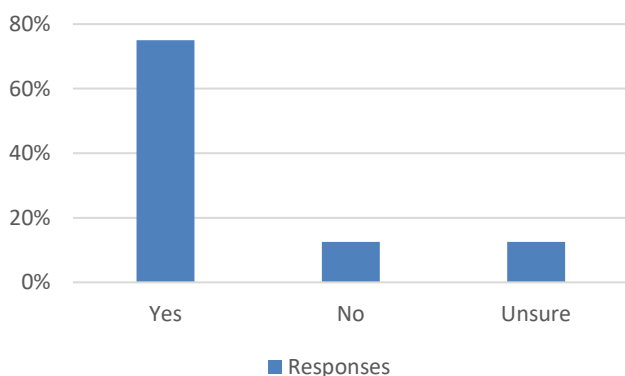


79% of the business surveyed sourced goods and services locally.

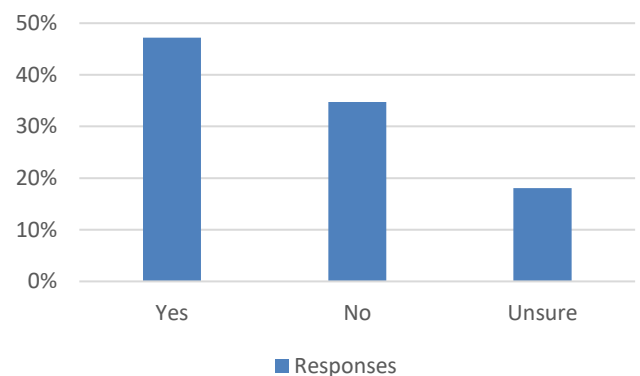
You told us, "you do try to support local wherever you can, but it can be difficult to find affordable products manufactured locally."

75% of our businesses understood the risks of cybersecurity but only 47% knew what to do in the event of an attack. 27% were interested in training and upskilling their staff in in this area.

Do you understand the risk of Cyber Security?



Would you know what to do in the event of a Cyber attack?

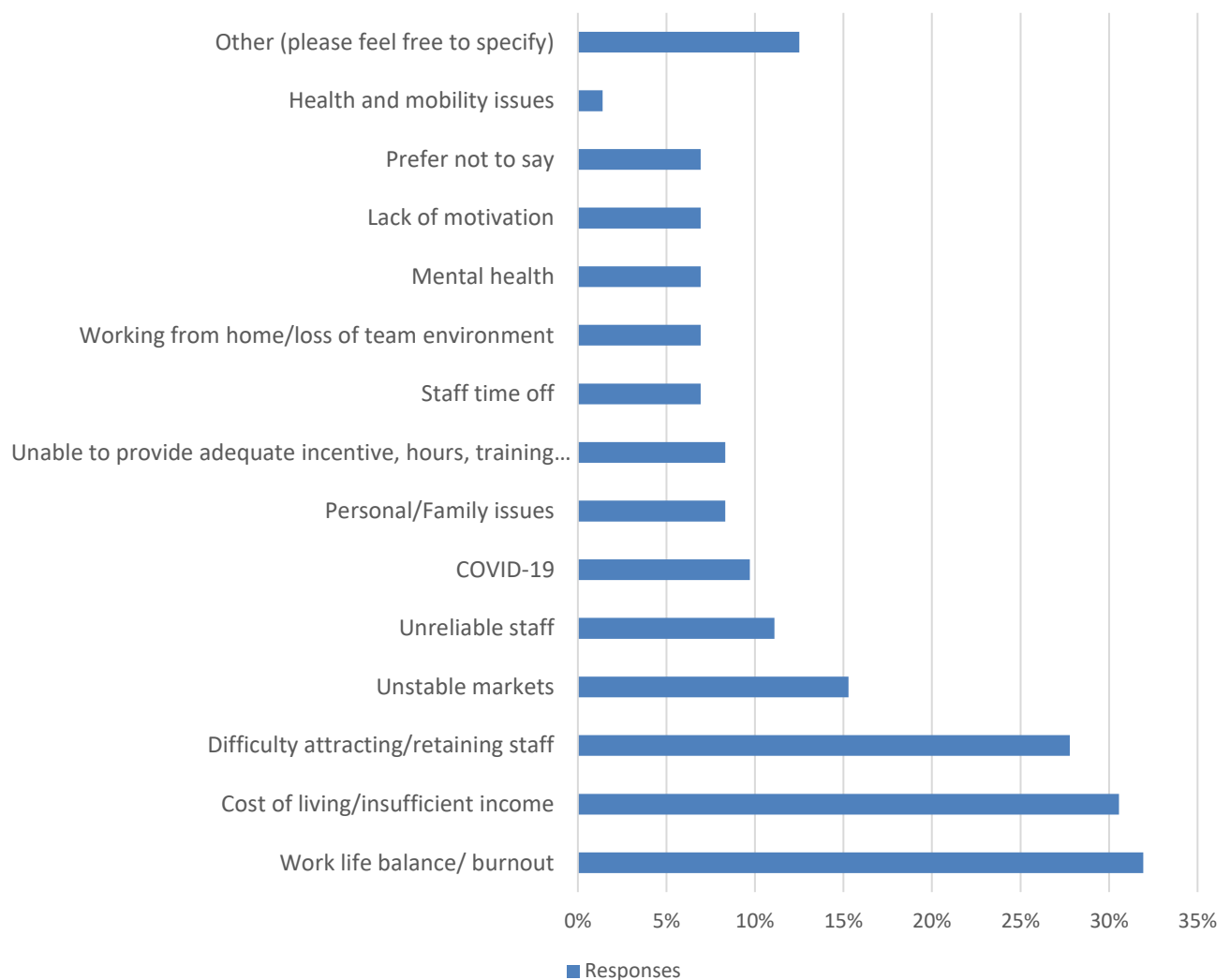


Wellbeing

Our business owners are finding their work life balance, the cost of living and their difficulty attracting and retaining staff a real challenge.

Those that selected 'other' told us that they weren't experiencing any wellbeing challenges.

Are you currently experiencing any wellbeing challenges?



If you are struggling Beyond Blue's NewAccess for Small Business Owners is a guided self-help mental health coaching program.

You will be matched with a specially trained mental health coach with a small business background.

It's free, confidential and convenient. Available nationally by phone or video call, no GP referral is required.

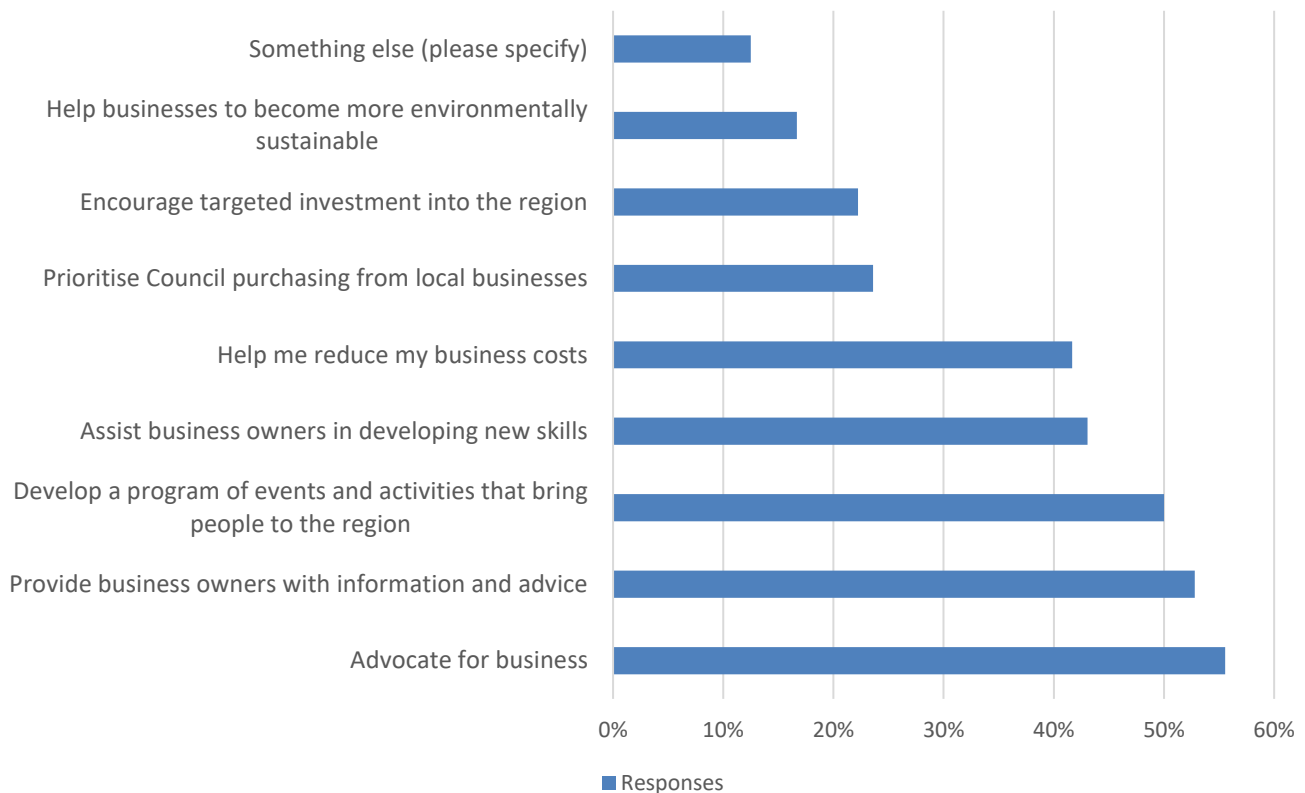
<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess-mental-health-coaching/newaccess-for-small-business-owners>

How can Council help to support local business?

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

Businesses were also interested in grants to help their businesses grow.

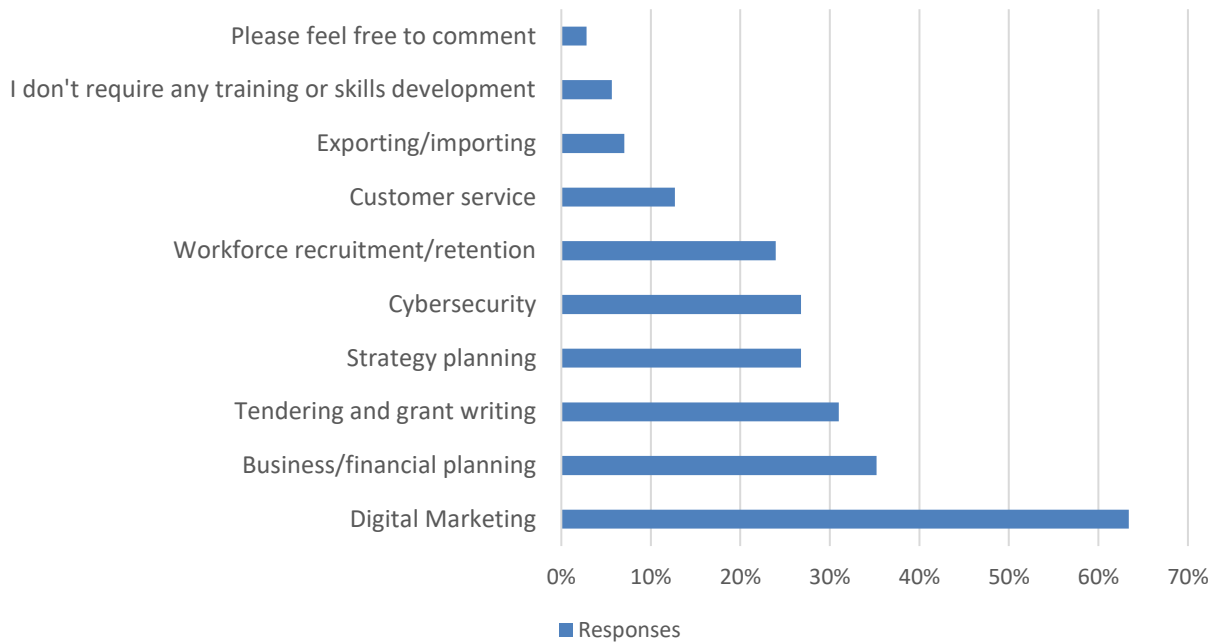
What are the most useful things Council can do to support your business goals?



Only 46% of businesses were aware of the grants available to support local businesses, artists and venues.

77% of businesses were aware of the Western Business Leaders, a group set up to support the City of Charles Sturt business community.

Are there any types of training or skills development that would be useful to your business and staff?



When asked were there any other workshops or topics they would like to see covered in the next 12 months 63% of our businesses responded digital marketing.

Businesses were also looking for support in...

- Accessing grants
- Financial planning, cashflow forecasting and budgeting.
- Developing business to business connections
- Accessing Buy Local opportunities.
- Developing strategies/ planning for growth
- Selling online
- Finding your purpose
- Public speaking and pitching
- Selling their business

Businesses were also asked how they liked to receive business support...

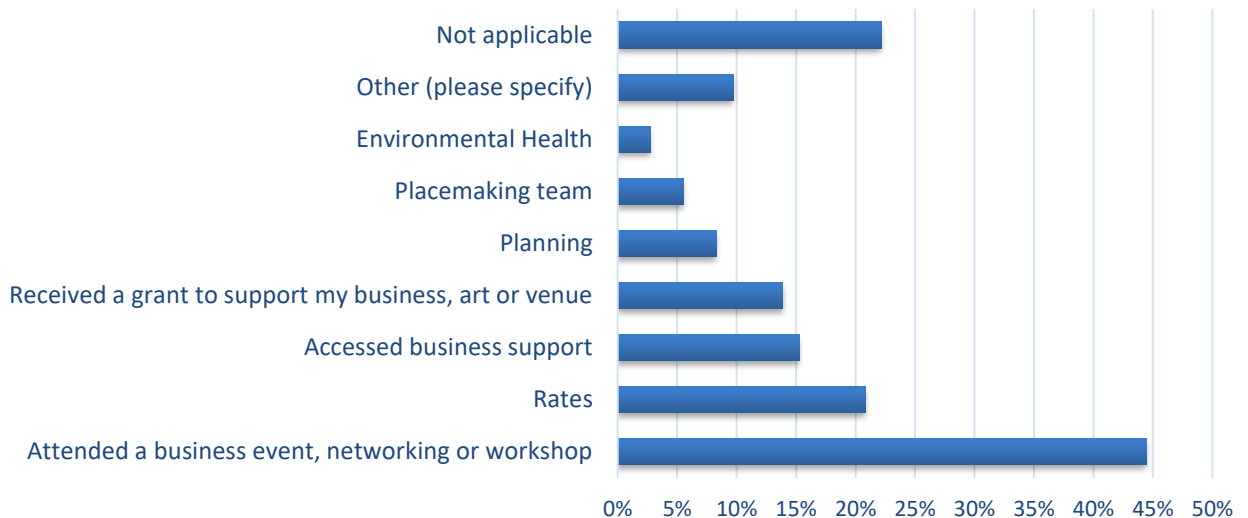
How do you prefer to receive business support?	Responses
Online	71%
One-to-one continued support (e.g., working with a business advisor or mentor)	40%
Masterclasses/events/workshops	54%
Not applicable	4%

Working with the City of Charles Sturt Council

52 businesses told us they had been in contact with Council in the last two years.

49 told us their experience working with us was good, very good or excellent.

Which of the following areas of Council did you have contact with?



How was your experience working with us?

Excellent	23%
Very good	28%
Good	22%
Fair	4%
Poor	3%
Not applicable	18%
Please feel free to leave a comment	1%
Answered 72	

3 respondents told us their experience had been fair or poor.

Their comments related to parking fines and difficulty completing time consuming and challenging forms as part of the planning process.

Doing business in the City of Charles Sturt

64% 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 proximity to the Adelaide CBD were other reasons for doing business here.

What are the advantages, if any of operating your business in the City of Charles Sturt?



83% of business respondents **couldn't think of any disadvantages** of doing business in the City of Charles Sturt.

6 businesses told us that parking was an issue.

We also received individual comments about...

- A lack of suitable co-working spaces
- A lack of suitable manufacturing premises for sale
- The distance from the Adelaide CBD
- Rising prices
- Their inability to collaborate with council with regards to business rescue, restructuring, turnaround and sustainable growth.
- Not enough done to support community groups and families.

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?

