Eurobodalla Shire Council

Business Confidence Research – 2023

Report Outline

Research Objectives

In 2021, Eurobodalla Shire Council conducted its first Business Confidence Survey. The survey was repeated in 2023, and is the subject of this Report.

The Eurobodalla economic profile indicates a total of 3,197 businesses across the Shire – a sample of those businesses were included in this research.

The objectives of this research include:

- Update the 2021 business survey findings

- Deliver information about business issues and trends

- Identify potential areas for Council action to promote economic development

- Assist business owners to inform future business decisions

- Encourage business owners to future focus

- Inspire business owners to work 'on' the business as well as 'in' it

Methodology and Sample

Methodology:

Online, self-completion survey (as was the case in 2021).

Sample Source, Selection and Error:

Council provided Micromex with email contact details for 847 businesses across the LGA, representing a range of industries. Listings includes business name, email address, phone number, and in most but not all cases, a contact name. All 847 businesses were invited to participate in the research.

After the initial invitation email was sent, reminder emails were also sent by Council and Micromex to maximise the response rate.

A total of 150 businesses completed at least up until Q9 – with most (but not all) answering the full survey (respondents who only answered a handful of questions and then stopped have been omitted from the data used to prepare this report). Therefore, base sizes differ between individual questions (and when questions are used to cross-analyse other questions). Thus, when reviewing results, always refer to the 'Base' information at the bottom left or below charts and tables on each slide.

A sample size of 150 businesses provides a maximum sampling error of +/-8.1% at 95% confidence. This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of N=150 businesses, 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 8.1%.

Interviewing:

Fieldwork was conducted 7th August – 9th September 2023

Interviewing was conducted in accordance with The Research Society Code of Professional Behaviour.

Questionnaire:

The 2023 Questionnaire was largely based on the 2021 version.

Data analysis

Four industry groups were created for analysis. See slide 6 for an explanation of how these groups were formed.

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

Within the report, ▲▼ are used to identify statistically significant differences between groups, i.e., location, industry, annual revenue, etc. Significance difference testing is a statistical test performed to evaluate the difference between two measurements. To identify the statistically significant differences between the groups of means, 'One-Way Anova tests' and 'Independent Samples T-tests' were used. 'Z Tests' were also used to determine statistically significant differences between column percentages.

Note: All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.
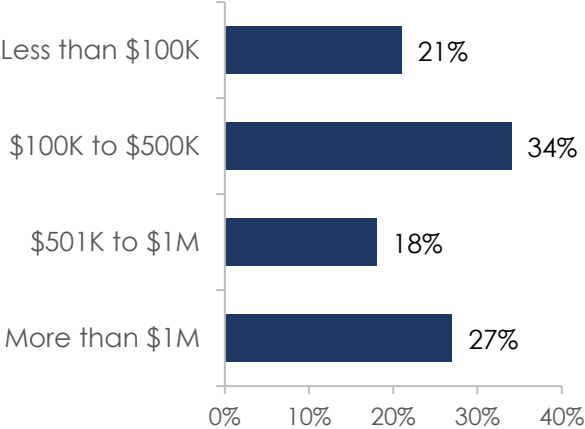
Sample Profile

Business Location

Business Location	%
North (Mogo/Batemans Bay)	46%
Central (Moruya/Tuross Head)	33%
South (Bodalla/Eurobodalla/Narooma)	23%

Annual Revenue

	%
Less than $100K	21%
$100K to $500K	34%
$501K to $1M	18%
More than $1M	27%

Number of Employees

	FT/PT staff	Casual/ fixed term
0	21%	36%
1-2	30%	31%
3-5	21%	15%
5+	28%	18%

Years in Operation

	%
Less than 2 years	10%
2-10 years	39%
More than 10 years	51%

Employee Breakdown

	Total employee count	FT/PT staff	Casual/ fixed term
0	12%	21%	36%
1-2	22%	30%	31%
3-5	19%	21%	15%
6-10	20%	13%	9%
11-20	17%	11%	5%
20+	11%	4%	5%
Average	11.2	6.4	4.8
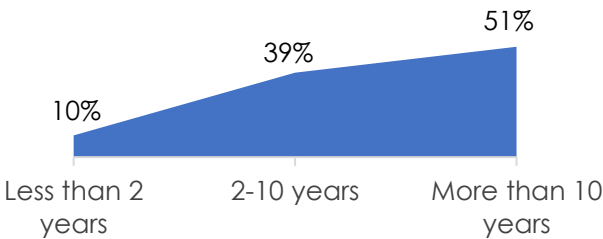
Averages used to calculate the 'Total employee' break:

0 staff = 0
1-2 staff = 1.5
3-5 staff = 4
6-10 staff = 8
11-15 staff = 13
16-20 staff = 18
21-50 staff = 35
51-100 staff = 75
More than 100 staff = 110

Sample Profile

Industry Grouped

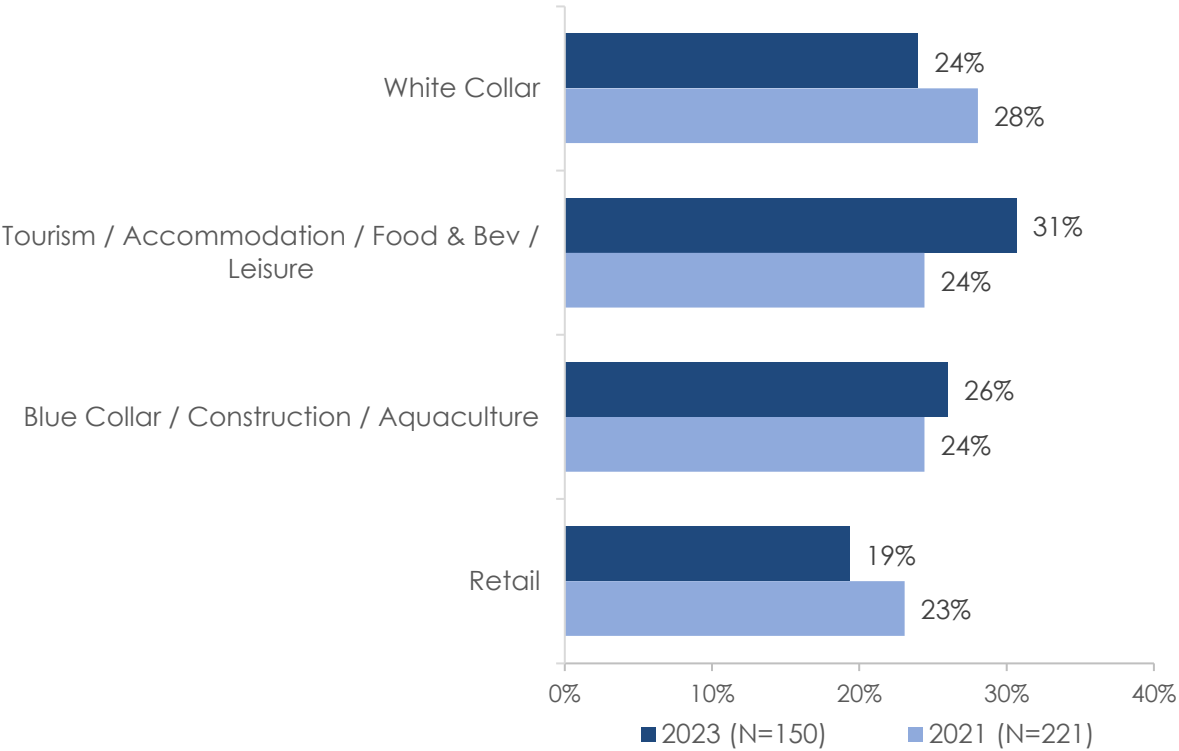|	2023 (N=150)	2021 (N=221)
White Collar	24%	28%
Tourism / Accommodation / Food & Bev / Leisure	31%	24%
Blue Collar / Construction / Aquaculture	26%	24%
Retail	19%	23%

Industry groups:

White Collar: Business Support & Logistics, Education, Finance & Financial Services, Healthcare, Personal Services, Professional, Real Estate and Telecommunications, Technology, Internet & Electronics

Tourism & Leisure: Accommodation, Entertainment & Leisure, Food & Beverages, Hospitality and Tourism

Blue Collar, Construction & Aquaculture: Agriculture, Aquaculture, Automotive, Construction, Machinery and Homes, Manufacturing, Trade and Transportation & Delivery

Retail: Retail

Breakdown of Industry	2023	2021
Retail	19%	23%
Construction, Machinery, and Homes	13%	10%
Accommodation	11%	10%
Healthcare	6%	5%
Tourism	7%	5%
Food & Beverages	5%	5%
Hospitality	5%	5%
Manufacturing	5%	2%
Professional	4%	9%
Education	4%▲	1%
Personal Services	3%	4%
Aquaculture	3%	1%
Entertainment & Leisure	3%	0%
Finance & Financial Services	3%	2%
Real Estate	3%	4%
Automotive	2%	2%
Transport and Delivery	2%	2%
Trade	1%▼	5%
Business Support & Logistics	1%	0%
Telecommunications, Technology, Internet & Electronics	1%	3%
Agriculture	0%	2%

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by year)

Summary Findings

Business Generation/Promotion

Eurobodalla businesses primarily use digital platforms to promote their business (website, Facebook and Instagram) and rely on return customers, word of mouth and locals as their main source of income.

Business Opportunities and Challenges

Businesses in the Eurobodalla Shire see a variety of opportunities with the increased investment and promotion of the area resulting in increased tourism, infrastructure development and population growth, resulting in increased business generation and income and growth and expansion.

1 in 3 stated increasing costs/economic shifts are a challenge, particularly for retail businesses, and 1 in 5 are challenged with attracting and retaining skilled staff (particularly Blue Collar/Construction businesses).

Business Snapshot

Overall results are similar to those in 2021, with businesses generally stable, performing well and having a positive future outlook:

- 80% of businesses are currently not planning on selling or closing their business – of those that are, the majority have an exit plan in place and are more likely to be within Tourism/Food and Beverage/Leisure

- Expectations of business turnover increasing (36%, down from 45% in 2021) and number of employees increasing (22%, down from 30% in 2021) suggest a degree of pessimism in 2023. However, the proportion of residents saying turnover/number of employees will decrease has not changed dramatically from 2021, perhaps suggesting the 2021 results were impacted by the limitations of COVID lockdowns

- Business Development Plans:

  o 65% have a current business plan (down from 76% in 2021)

  o 68% allocate time to strategy planning (down from 73% in 2021)

  o 46% have a business resilience/continuity plan in place (down from 52% in 2021)

  o 42% have an exit plan in place (slightly down from 44% in 2021)

  o 14% do not have any business development plans in place (more likely to be Blue Collar/Construction at 21%)

Summary: Industry

White Collar

- Average of 6.6 full-time/part-time staff and 3.5 casual/contract staff
- Significantly more likely to state their annual revenue is less than $100k
- Stable metrics overall, with business turnover and employee base expected to remain the same over the next 12 months

Blue Collar/ Construction/ Aquaculture

- Average of 8.2 full-time/part-time staff and 3.2 casual/contract staff
- 43% have an annual revenue of more than $500k
- 41% expect an increase in business turnover in next 12 months
- 1 in 3 expect their staff numbers to increase
- Reliant on word of mouth/referrals
- Less likely to have business development plans in place

Industry in Focus

Tourism/ Accommodation / Food & Beverage/ Leisure

- Average of 5.0 full-time/part-time staff and 8.9 casual/contract staff
- 50% have an annual revenue of more than $500k
- 28% are preparing to sell or close
- 1 in 5 expect a decrease in staff in next 12 months
- Reliant on tourism, visitors, bookings and online sales
- Promote via social media
- Significantly more likely to have a business, resilience/continuity plan and allocate time to strategy planning

Retail

- Average of 5.9 full-time/part-time staff and 2.2 casual/contract staff
- 48% have an annual revenue of more than $500k
- Challenged by consumer spending (impacted by raising costs/economic impact)
- Reliant on locals, walk ins and visitors
- Promote via TV advertising

Business Operations and Outlook

This section explores predicted changes to business turnover and employee growth in the next 12 months, plans to sell or close the business, and the main challenges and opportunities that businesses in the Eurobodalla region are facing.

Section One

Preparing to Sell or Close the Business

Similar to 2021, one in five businesses are considering closing or selling their business. Businesses located in Central Eurobodalla are significantly more likely, whilst those in the North are significantly less likely – no significant differences by number of employees, although slightly higher for those with 3-6 employees. Further analysis shown on the next slide.

	2023	2021	Area			Annual Revenue		Years in Operation	
			North	Central	South	Less than $500K	More than $500K	10 years or less	More than 10 years
Yes %	20%	19%	13%▼	30%▲	17%	19%	21%	20%	20%
Base	150	207	69	50	35	83	67	74	76
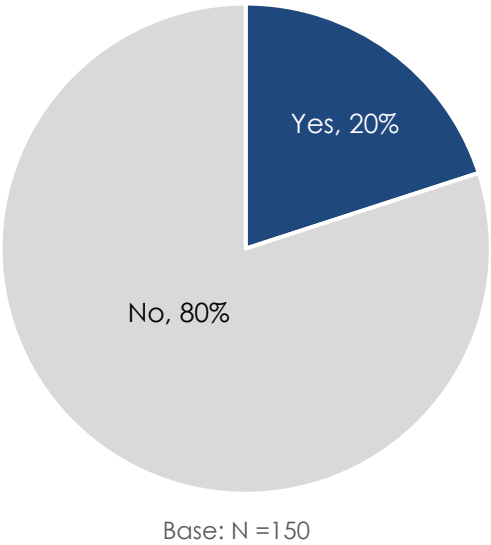
Yes, 20%

No, 80%

Base: N =150

	Full-time Staff		Casual Staff		Total Employee Count		
	2 or less	3 or more	2 or less	3 or more	2 or less	3-6	6+
Yes %	18%	22%	20%	20%	18%	26%	18%
Base	76	74	101	49	51	43	56

Preparing to Sell or Close the Business

The top table shown reports those who are considering selling or closing their business by whether they think their turnover will increase, stay the same or decrease in the next 12 months. Those who believe their turnover will decrease are significantly more likely to be considering selling/closing their business. Businesses within the tourism and leisure industry are more likely to consider selling/closing.

	Overall	Business Turnover			Employee Growth		
		NET Increase	Stay the same	NET Decrease	NET Increase	Stay the same	NET Decrease
Yes %	20%	11%▼	15%	44%▲	15%▼	15%▼	50%▲
Base	150	54	62	34	33	95	22

	Overall	Industry			
		White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction & Aquaculture	Retail
Yes %	20%	17%	28%	10%	24%
Base	150	36	46	39	29

	Q19. Majority of Business Sales						
	Return Customers	Word of mouth	Local Customers	Visitors	Bookings	Walk-ins	Online sales
Yes %	20%	19%	18%	22%	20%	19%	25%
Base	96	85	78	46	45	32	24

Business Turnover in the Next 12 Months

36% predict that their business will increase turnover in the next 12 months, a slight decline from 2021 – whilst 23% believe turnover will decrease (almost identical to 2021 – 22%). Perhaps in 2021 (when fieldwork was partly conducted during the second lock-down which started on June 26) there was a sense that things had to get better. A predicted increase is slightly higher for those in the blue collar, construction and aquaculture industry.
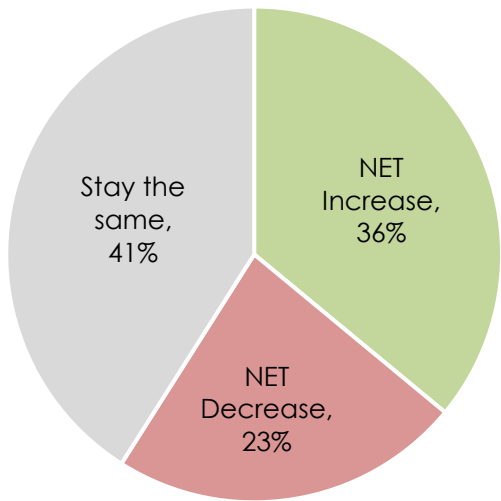
Increase		Decrease	
NET Increase	**36%**	**NET Decrease**	**23%**
1-10%	15%	1-10%	2%
11-20%	11%	11-20%	12%
21-30%	7%	21-30%	5%
31-40%	1%	31-40%	1%
More than 40%	1%	More than 40%	3%

Change to Business Turnover	Overall 2023	Overall 2021	Area			Industry			
			North	Central	South	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction & Aquaculture	Retail
NET Increase	36%	45%	43%	36%	26%	36%	37%	41%	28%
Stay the same	41%	33%	33%	48%	43%	50%	39%	36%	41%
NET Decrease	23%	22%	23%	16%	31%	14%	24%	23%	31%
Base	150	207	69	50	35	36	46	39	29

Q6. *In the next twelve months: Do you predict any change to your business turnover?*
Q7. *If you predicted change in Q6 by what approximate percentage do you expect it to change by?*

Employee Growth in the Next 12 Months

Approximately one in five businesses (22%) predict that their business will experience employee growth in the next 12 months, a drop of 8% from 30% in 2021.

However, the 'decrease' score only increased by 4% in 2023 compared to 2021. Again, blue collar, construction and aquaculture predict growth.
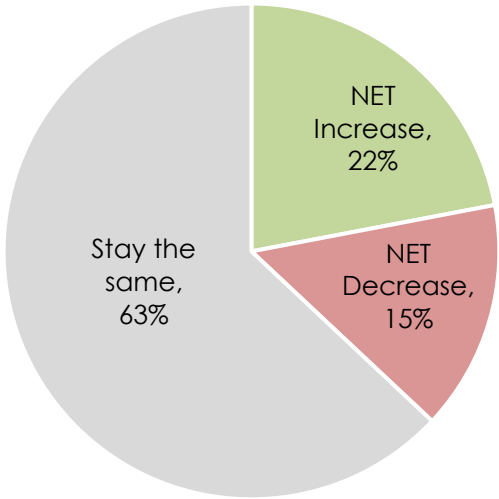
Increase		Decrease	
NET Increase	**22%**	**NET Decrease**	**15%**
1-10%	17%	1-10%	6%
11-20%	2%	11-20%	3%
21-30%	1%	21-30%	1%
31-40%	1%	31-40%	2%
More than 40%	1%	More than 40%	2%

Change to number of employees	Overall 2023	Overall 2021	Area			Industry			
			North	Central	South	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction & Aquaculture	Retail
NET Increase	22%	30%	25%	26%	11%	17%	24%	33%▲	10%
Stay the same	63%	59%	61%	62%	69%	69%	57%	56%	76%
NET Decrease	15%	11%	14%	12%	20%	14%	20%	10%	14%
Base	150	207	69	50	35	36	46	39	29

Q8. *And in the next twelve months, do you predict your current number of employees will change?*
Q9. *If you predicted change in Q8 by what approximate percentage do you expect it to change by?*

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group) 14

Main Business Opportunities

Main business opportunities include generating sales, growth/expansion opportunities, tourism of the area and increased investment/development of the area (such as increasing housing developments, the new hospital and bypass). The next slide shows all opportunities by industry, where the Industry is reflective of the code e.g. tourism see opportunities in the influx of tourism in the region and construction businesses see opportunity in local developments.
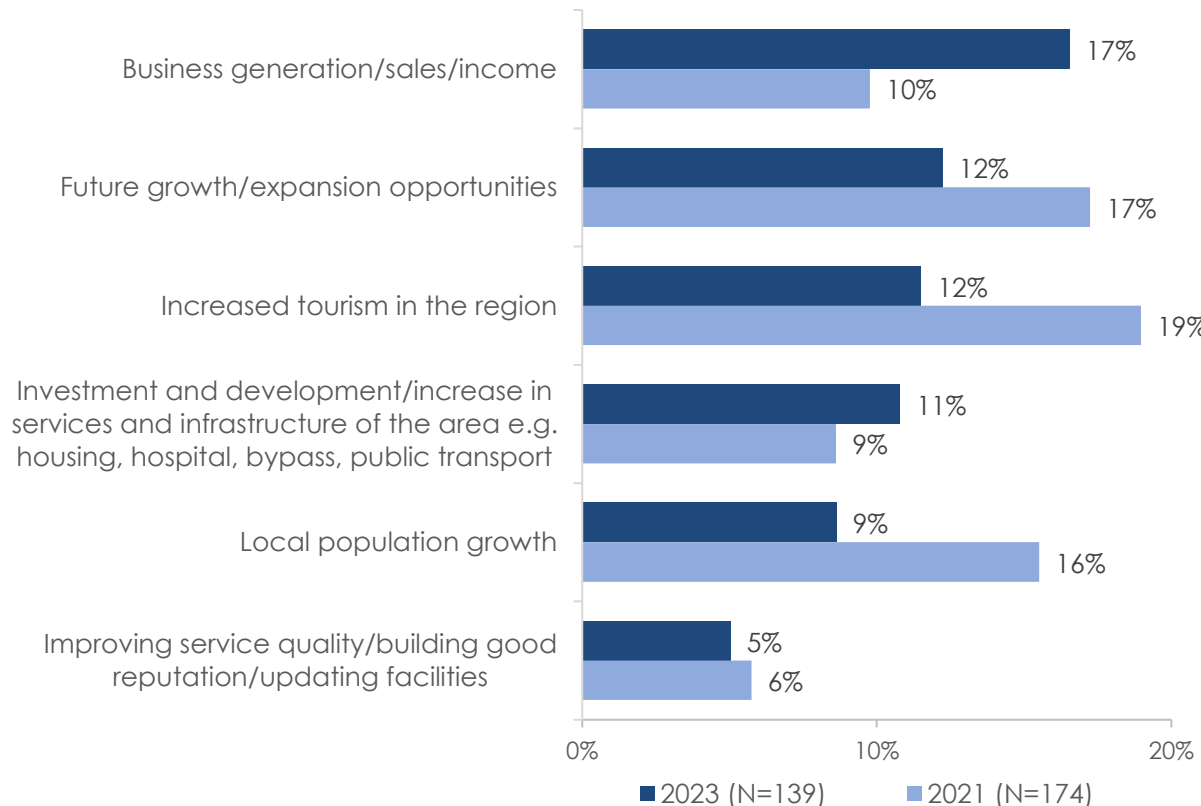
Example verbatim responses

"Increased client base, with population growth through increased online and conventional marketing"

"Continued need for more services"

"Growth of the area. Opportunity to bring a fresh, young perspective"

"Diversity of services offered"

"Growth with population, other businesses growing and more tourism in the area"

"The demand in regional travel and also the demand for high end accommodation"

"New hospital and new developments in the region will mean more clients and business opportunities for us. The new development of remote workers to the region means that our clientele is expanding"

"Increased investment in leisure related assets and the removal of travel restrictions"

"Upgrade existing accommodation to be more modern and MTB friendly. Capture the new MTB tourists"

Category	2023 (N=139)	2021 (N=174)
Business generation/sales/income	17%	10%
Future growth/expansion opportunities	12%	17%
Increased tourism in the region	12%	19%
Investment and development/increase in services and infrastructure of the area e.g. housing, hospital, bypass, public transport	11%	9%
Local population growth	9%	16%
Improving service quality/building good reputation/updating facilities	5%	6%

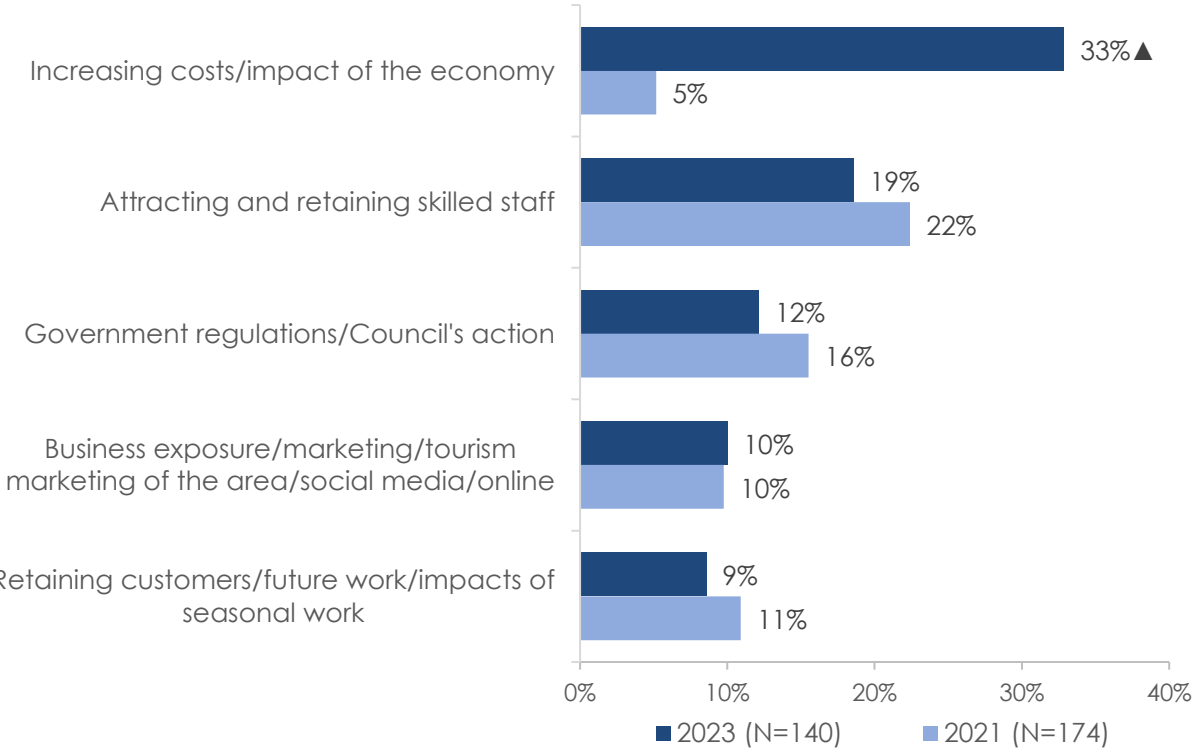Q11.   *What, if anything, do you see as the main opportunities of your business?*

Note: A slight change in code definitions has been made in 2023 (to both the 2023 and 2021 data), therefore 2021 results above differ slightly to the 2021 report.

Main Business Opportunities by Industry

	Overall	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction and Aquaculture	Retail
Business generation/sales/income	17%	12%	19%	21%	12%
Future growth/expansion opportunities	12%	15%	14%	5%	16%
Increased tourism in the region	12%	3%	24%▲	3%▼	16%
Investment and development/increase in services and infrastructure of the area e.g. housing, hospital, bypass, public transport	11%	6%	7%	16%	16%
Local population growth	9%	12%	7%	8%	8%
Improving service quality/building good reputation/ updating facilities	5%	3%	7%	8%	0%
Market accessibility/gaining market share/lack of competitors	4%	9%	2%	3%	4%
Changes in technology/growth in online business sales and advertising	3%	0%	0%	0%	16%▲
Growth in building and construction industry	3%	3%	0%	8%▲	0%
Education (staff, community)	3%	9%▲	0%	3%	0%
Government influence/tenders/contract/NDIS	1%	3%	0%	3%	0%
Support local (buy local, employ local)	1%	0%	5%▲	0%	0%
Stable economy/rates decreasing	1%	0%	0%	5%▲	0%
Location	1%	0%	0%	0%	4%▲
Flexibility/ability to work from anywhere	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Other comments	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%
Don't know/can't say	9%	15%	14%	3%	0%
No opportunities	8%	9%	2%	13%	8%
Base	139	34	42	38	25

Q11.   *What, if anything, do you see as the main opportunities of your business?*

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group) 16

Main Challenges

Significantly more businesses identified increasing costs/impact of the economy as a challenge to their business this year (just 5% in 2021 compared to 33% now).

Attracting and retaining skilled staff continues to be a key area of concern.

Other challenges include government regulations, exposure and maintaining work/business.

Retail businesses are more likely impacted by increasing costs and insufficient parking (see overleaf).

2023 (N=140) **2021 (N=174)**

Challenge	2023	2021
Increasing costs/impact of the economy	33%▲	5%
Attracting and retaining skilled staff	19%	22%
Government regulations/Council's action	12%	16%
Business exposure/marketing/tourism marketing of the area/social media/online	10%	10%
Retaining customers/future work/impacts of seasonal work	9%	11%

Example verbatim responses

"Cost of living, interest rates, energy, costs, fuel costs...."

"Legislation around rental requirements removing stock quotas from the Eurobodalla area/Access to staff; Covid has caused a cultural change in people preferring Centrelink to working (I am told) / Lost opportunities to large organisations or corporates servicing our region"

"Lack of appropriate commercial spaces to lease, or even purchase"

"High wages, high energy costs, consumer uncertainty"

"Taxes, supply problems, and technical support unavailable locally"

"No effective destination development or marketing"

"Availability of trained employees"

"Economic headwinds impacting discretionary spending"

"Businesses not working/marketing as a destination together"

Note: A slight change in code definitions has been made in 2023 (to both the 2023 and 2021 data), therefore 2021 results above differ slightly to the 2021 report.

Q12.   What, if anything, do you see as your main challenges?

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by year) 17

Main Challenges by Industry

	Overall	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction and Aquaculture	Retail
Increasing costs/impact of the economy	33%	26%	33%	26%	52%▲
Attracting and retaining skilled staff	19%	20%	17%	29%	4%▼
Government regulations/Council's action	12%	9%	14%	18%	4%
Business exposure/marketing/tourism marketing of the area/social media/online	10%	6%	14%	3%	20%
Retaining customers/future work/impacts of seasonal work	9%	6%	10%	8%	12%
Planning for growth and development e.g. infrastructure and housing to cater for growth	4%	9%	0%	5%	4%
Location e.g. isolated/remote	4%	3%	5%	3%	8%
Personal impacts/being able to keep up/work and life balance	3%	6%	2%	3%	0%
Product/service improvements	2%	6%	0%	3%	0%
Advancements/changes in technology	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Availability of commercial/industrial land and premises	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Growth	1%	0%	5%▲	0%	0%
Impacts of COVID-19	1%	0%	5%▲	0%	0%
Insufficient parking	1%	0%	0%	0%	8%▲
Land and environmental management/climate/natural disasters	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%
Other comments	3%	6%	2%	3%	0%
Unsure/don't know	3%	6%	2%	3%	0%
Nothing	4%	6%	0%	8%	0%
Base	140	35	42	38	25

Q12.   *What, if anything, do you see as your main challenges?*   ▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group) 18

# Business Trade and Promotion

This section explores sources of trade that make up the majority of sales for businesses, and provides insight into advertising channels used.

Section Two

Business Trade

In line with 2021 results, return customers, word of mouth and local customers are the primary sources of trade as identified by businesses surveyed. 34% say visitors make up a large part of their business trade.

The below table (on the right) cross-analyses Q19 by itself, so that patterns of trade can be established (table is read down the columns). For instance, in general, businesses that say visitors make up the majority of their business sales, also rely on return customers (80 %) – whilst those relying on walk ins also strongly rely on local customers (97%).
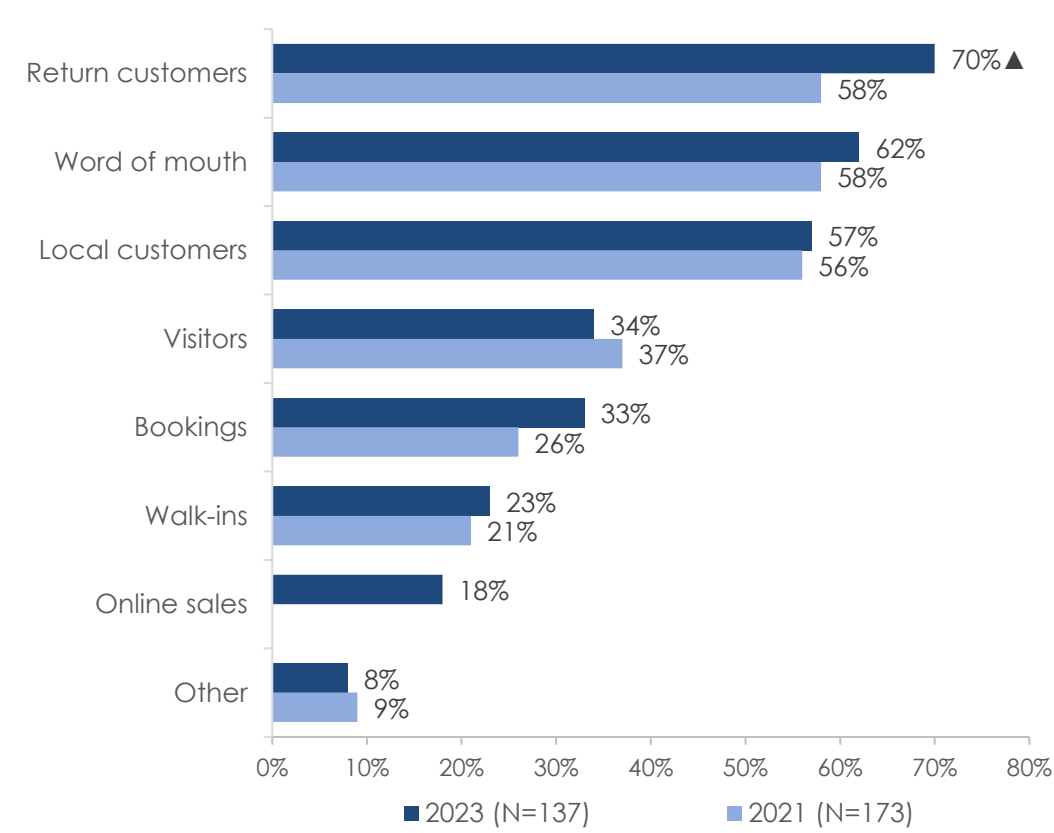
Column %	Return customers	Word of Mouth	Local customers	Visitors	Bookings	Walk ins	Online sales
Return customers	100%	85%	85%	80%	71%	91%	71%
Word of Mouth	75%	100%	76%	65%	60%	81%	50%
Local customers	69%	69%	100%	65%	44%	97%	33%
Visitors	39%	35%	38%	100%	42%	66%	50%
Bookings	33%	32%	26%	41%	100%	22%	46%
Walk ins	30%	31%	40%	46%	16%	100%	8%
Online sales	18%	14%	10%	26%	24%	6%	100%

Bar chart (Q19 – Which of the following makes up the majority of your business sales?):

| Category	2023 (N=137)	2021 (N=173)
Return customers	70% ▲	58%
Word of mouth	62%	58%
Local customers	57%	56%
Visitors	34%	37%
Bookings	33%	26%
Walk-ins	23%	21%
Online sales	18%	
Other	8%	9%

■ 2023 (N=137) ■ 2021 (N=173)

Business Trade

Businesses located in the North are more likely than other businesses to state the majority of their business sales is derived from local customers and walk ins.

Tourism/leisure-based businesses are more likely than other businesses to have their sales come from visitors, bookings and online sales.

	Overall	Area			Industry			
		North	Central	South	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction and Aquaculture	Retail
Return customers	70%	75%	72%	63%	59%	67%	74%	84%
Word of Mouth	62%	67%	57%	59%	75%	50%	68%	56%
Local customers	57%	67%▲	54%	41%▼	66%	36%▼	53%	88%▲
Visitors	34%	37%	28%	34%	13%▼	55%▲	16%▼	52%▲
Bookings	33%	30%	37%	38%	34%	62%▲	21%	0%▼
Walk ins	23%	33%▲	13%▼	19%	9%▼	26%	13%	52%▲
Online sales	18%	17%	20%	16%	13%	29%▲	11%	16%
Other	8%	6%	9%	9%	6%	2%	18%▲	4%
Base	137	63	46	32	32	42	38	25

Q19.   *Which of the following makes up the majority of your business sales?*   ▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group) 21

Business Promotion

Overall, media used to advertise businesses is very similar in 2023 to 2021 – perhaps there has been a small shift away from traditional media and in-person towards digital, although the changes are not significant.

91% of businesses are using digital methods to advertise their business, primarily using their website (82%) and Facebook (74%).

Legend: ■ 2023 (N=138) ■ 2021 (N=174)
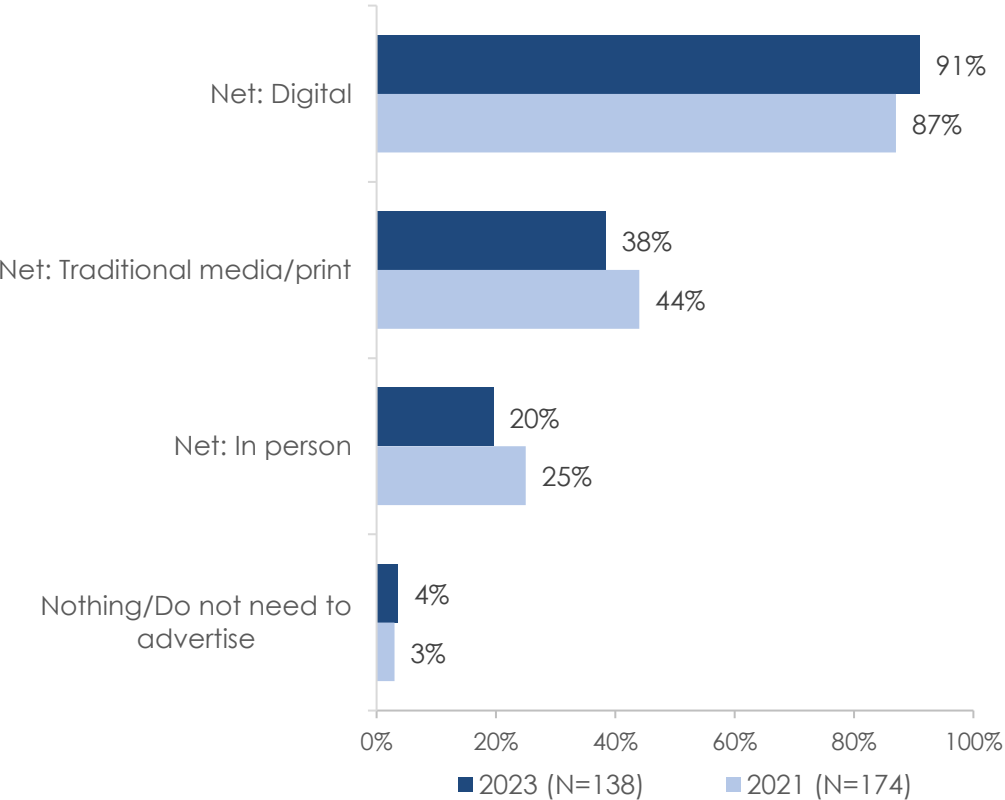
Advertising methods	2023 (N=138)	2021 (N=174)
Net: Digital	**91%**	**87%**
Website	82%	75%
Facebook	74%	74%
Instagram	56%	47%
Google/other online platforms	5%	6%
Electronic direct mail (EDM)/e-newsletter	3%	1%
Net: Traditional media/print	**38%**	**44%**
Radio	18%	25%
Trade magazines	14%	11%
Newspapers	12%	17%
Television	9%	16%
Signage/sponsorship	6%	5%
Flyers	4%	2%
Business cards	1%	0%
Mail	1%	0%
Phone book	1%	1%
Net: In person	**20%**	**25%**
Word of mouth/referrals/repeat customers	14%	17%
Events/promotional work	4%	1%
Networking	1%	2%
Chamber of Commerce	1%	1%
Nothing	4%	3%

Note: A slight change in Net group definitions has been made in 2023 (to both the 2023 and 2021 data), therefore 2021 results above differ slightly to the 2021 report.

Business Promotion

Businesses within the tourism and leisure industries are more reliant on digital methods (particularly Facebook and Instagram) and trade magazines to promote their business.

Blue Collar, Construction and Aquaculture businesses are less likely to advertise and more reliant on word of mouth/referrals/repeat customers.

	Overall	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction and Aquaculture	Retail
Net: Digital	**91%**	**88%**	**98%**	**82%▼**	**96%**
Website	82%	88%	86%	68%▼	88%
Facebook	74%	64%	88%▲	58%▼	88%
Instagram	56%	42%	71%▲	39%▼	72%
Google/other online platforms	5%	0%	10%	5%	4%
Electronic direct mail (EDM)/e-newsletter	3%	3%	7%▲	0%	0%
Net: Traditional media/print	**38%**	**27%**	**50%**	**26%**	**52%**
Radio	18%	9%	24%	13%	28%
Television	9%	3%	5%	8%	28%▲
Trade magazines	14%	6%	33%▲	3%▼	12%
Newspapers	12%	15%	12%	11%	8%
Signage/sponsorship	6%	3%	2%	8%	12%
Flyers	4%	0%	5%	3%	8%
Business cards	1%	0%	2%	3%	0%
Phone book	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%
Mail	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Net: In person	**20%**	**15%**	**17%**	**29%**	**16%**
Word of mouth/referrals/repeat costumers	14%	12%	7%	26%▲	12%
Events/promotional work	4%	0%	7%	3%	4%
Networking	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Chamber of Commerce	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Nothing	4%	3%	0%	11%▲	0%
Base	138	33	42	38	25

Q18.   How do you advertise your business?

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group) 23
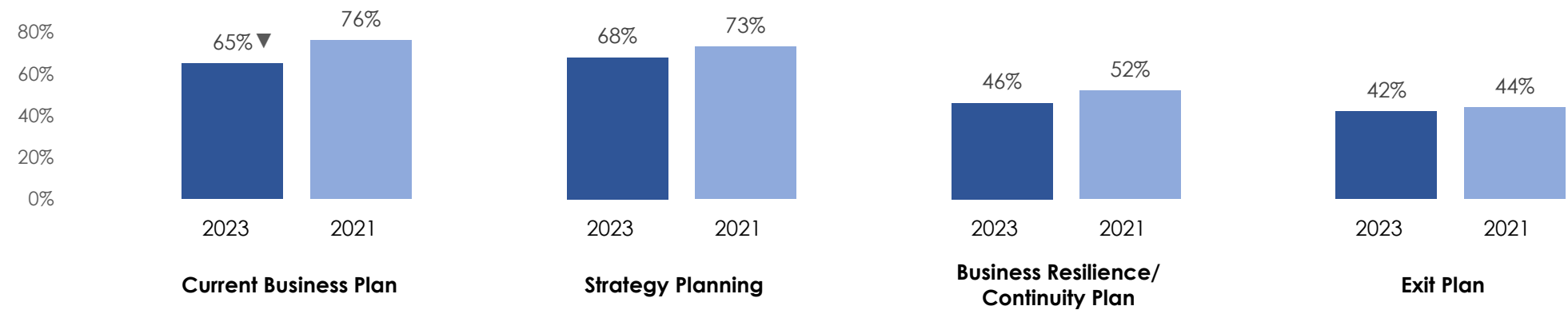
Business Development

This section explores the current level of planning that businesses undertake, including business plans, strategy plans, resilience/continuity plans and exit plans.

Section Three

Business Development Summary

This slide summarises the key findings of the four questions regarding business planning. Results for all four measures have dipped in 2023 – significantly so for having a current business plan – although the incidence of not having any of the four has only increased by 1% to 14%. Detailed results are on the slides that follow.

Yes % - Year on Year Comparison

Current Business Plan
- 2023: 65% ▼
- 2021: 76%

Strategy Planning
- 2023: 68%
- 2021: 73%

Business Resilience/ Continuity Plan
- 2023: 46%
- 2021: 52%

Exit Plan
- 2023: 42%
- 2021: 44%

14%
of businesses do not have **any** business development plans in place

	Overall 2023	Overall 2021	Area			Annual Revenue	
			North	Central	South	Less than $500K	More than $500K
'No' to Q14/15/16/17	14%	13%	9%	13%	24%	14%	14%

	Total Employee Count			Years in Operation		Industry			
	2 or less	3-6	6+	10 years or less	More than 10 years	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction & Aquaculture	Retail
'No' to Q14/15/16/17	19%	13%	12%	16%	13%	12%	12%	21%	12%

Base: 2021 N=174, 2023 N=138

Q14. *Do you have a current business plan?*
Q15. *Do you allocate time each year to strategy planning?*
Q16. *Do you have a business resilience/continuity plan?*
Q17. *Do you have an exit plan in place?*

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by year)

25

Current Business Plan

Overall, 65% of those surveyed have a current business plan – this is a significant drop from 2021 (76%).

Businesses with a greater number of employees and those in tourism and leisure are significantly more likely to have a current business plan.
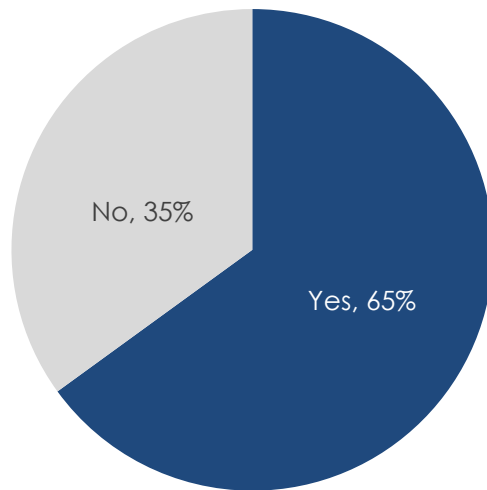
No, 35%

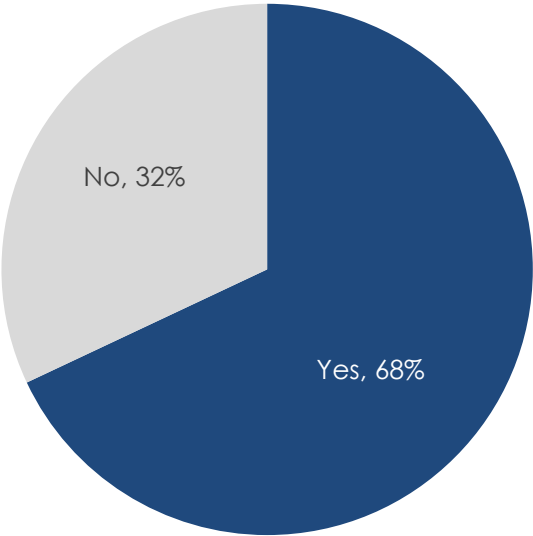Yes, 65%

Base: N=139

	Overall 2023	Overall 2021	Area			Annual Revenue		Years in Operation	
			North	Central	South	Less than $500K	More than $500K	10 years or less	More than 10 years
Yes %	65%▼	76%	66%	67%	61%	58%	73%	59%	70%
Base	139	174	64	46	33	76	63	68	71

	Full-time Staff		Casual Staff		Total Employee Count		
	2 or less	3 or more	2 or less	3 or more	2 or less	3-6	6+
Yes %	55%	75%▲	59%	78%▲	51%▼	63%	79%▲
Base	71	68	94	45	47	40	52

	Industry			
	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction & Aquaculture	Retail
Yes %	59%	79%▲	53%	68%
Base	34	42	38	25

Q14. Do you have a current business plan?

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by year/group) 26

Strategy Planning

68% of businesses surveyed allocate time each year to strategy planning. This is significantly higher for businesses with higher revenue, a greater number of full-time staff and those in tourism and leisure. Those in blue collar, construction and aquaculture were significantly less likely to allocate time to annual strategy planning.
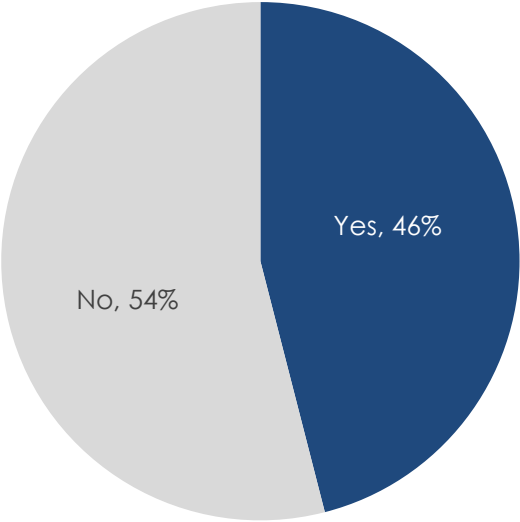

No, 32%

Yes, 68%

Base: N=139

	Overall 2023	Overall 2021	Area			Annual Revenue		Years in Operation	
			North	Central	South	Less than $500K	More than $500K	10 years or less	More than 10 years
Yes %	68%	73%	77%	67%	55%	61%	78%▲	69%	68%
Base	139	174	64	46	33	76	63	68	71

	Full-time Staff		Casual Staff		Total Employee Count		
	2 or less	3 or more	2 or less	3 or more	2 or less	3-6	6+
Yes %	58%	79%▲	61%	84%▲	55%▼	63%	85%▲
Base	71	68	94	45	47	40	52

	Industry			
	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction & Aquaculture	Retail
Yes %	65%	83%▲	53%▼	72%
Base	34	42	38	25

Q15. Do you allocate time each year to strategy planning?

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by year/group)

Resilience/Continuity Plan

Less than half (46%) of respondents have a business resilience/continuity plan in place. Businesses with more than $500K revenue, a greater number of employees and those in tourism and leisure are significantly more likely to have a business resilience/continuity plan.
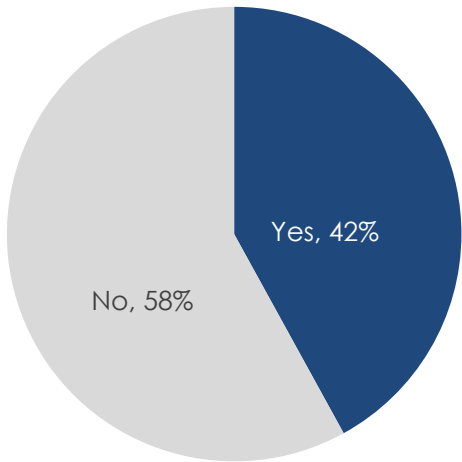

Base: N=138

	Overall 2023	Overall 2021	Area			Annual Revenue		Years in Operation	
			North	Central	South	Less than $500K	More than $500K	10 years or less	More than 10 years
Yes %	46%	52%	52%	46%	34%	37%	56%▲	40%	51%
Base	138	174	64	46	32	75	63	67	71

	Full-time Staff		Casual Staff		Total Employee Count		
	2 or less	3 or more	2 or less	3 or more	2 or less	3-6	6+
Yes %	34%	57%▲	34%	69%▲	24%▼	50%	62%▲
Base	70	68	93	45	46	40	52

	Industry			
	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction & Aquaculture	Retail
Yes %	39%	60%▲	37%	44%
Base	33	42	38	25

Exit Planning

42% have an exit plan in place. Businesses with fewer staff, lower annual revenue and operating for 10 years or less are less likely to have an exit plan.
Positively, the majority of those who are planning to sell or close their business are likely to have an exit plan in place.

Base: N=138

	Preparing to sell or close business (Q10)	Not selling/ closing
Yes %	75%▲	34%
Base	28	110

	Overall 2023	Overall 2021	Area			Annual Revenue		Years in Operation	
			North	Central	South	Less than $500K	More than $500K	10 years or less	More than 10 years
Yes %	42%	44%	47%	46%	31%	36%	49%	36%	48%
Base	138	174	64	46	32	75	63	67	71

	Full-time Staff		Casual Staff		Total Employee Count		
	2 or less	3 or more	2 or less	3 or more	2 or less	3-6	6+
Yes %	30%	54%▲	38%	51%	26%▼	48%	52%
Base	70	68	93	45	46	40	52

	Industry			
	White Collar	Tourism & Leisure	Blue Collar, Construction & Aquaculture	Retail
Yes %	55%	38%	32%	48%
Base	33	42	38	25

Further Offerings of Support/Training

A new open-ended question was included in 2023, asking about support/training businesses would like to see offered. 57% of businesses offered at least one open-ended suggestion, which may indicate that a number of businesses are potentially keen to engage more with Council.

Of those who could suggested further support and training options, most common responses included financial assistance and assistance with marketing/increased tourism to the area to help with exposure. Other types of support were fragmented (mentioned by 5% or less of respondents), and include Council working with businesses, staff training, social media management and assistance with regulations/requirements.

Category	%
Grants/funding/financial support	12%
Marketing/exposure/tourism for the area	10%
Business planning	5%
Improved Council action/working with businesses	5%
Staff training	5%
Social media	4%
Support with regulations/requirements	4%
Unsure what could be offered/business support in general	4%
Council training for processes/forms e.g. tenders/DAs	2%
Having more consultation with/interest from Council	2%
Networking	2%
Community services	1%
Customer service	1%
First aid	1%
Housing development	1%
Indigenous work placement	1%
Security training	1%
Tax advice	1%
Website development	1%
Don't know/no answer/not needed	43%

Base: N=137

Q20.   Is there any support or training that you would like to see offered?

Questionnaire

Appendix

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Thank you for participating in the 2023 Eurobodalla Shire Council confidential business confidence questionnaire. We are looking forward to receiving and analysing your feedback which will provide Council with an up-to-date measure of the commercial confidence of local business owners, provide information about business issues and trends and identify potential areas for Council action to promote economic development.

Council's economic development team hopes to:

- encourage you to future focus
- inspire you to work on the business as well as in it; and
- assist you to make informed future business decisions.

This survey was first undertaken in 2021 and will be conducted biennially and aggregated results will be publicly reported on Council's website.

If you are unable to answer all questions in one sitting, please save the page you are on – then when you click on the survey link later, you will return to where you left off.

Please note that your responses to these questions will only be reported in aggregate form – and your name/contact details will not be shared with anyone else.

At the end of the survey, please remember to click the 'submit' button to ensure your responses are recorded.

To start this survey, please enter the password that was emailed to you:

Password: …………………………………………..

eurobodalla shire council **Business Confidence Questionnaire**

Use image as header for all pages

Section 1: Initial Data

1. Business Location Postcode (MR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	2536	
2	2537	
3	2540	
4	2545	
5	2546	

2. Which of the following best describes the principal industry of your business? (DROP)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Accommodation	
2	Aquaculture	
3	Agriculture	
4	Automotive	
5	Business Support & Logistics	
6	Construction, Machinery, and Homes	
7	Education	
8	Entertainment & Leisure	
9	Finance & Financial Services	
10	Food & Beverages	
11	Healthcare	
12	Hospitality	
13	Manufacturing	
14	Personal Services	
15	Professional	
16	Retail	
17	Real Estate	
18	Telecommunications, Technology, Internet, & Electronics	
19	Tourism	
20	Trade	
21	Transport and Delivery	

3. What is your annual revenue? (SR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Less than $100K	
2	$100K - $500K	
3	$501K -$1M	
4	More than $1M	

4a. How many fulltime/permanent part-time employees do you have? (SR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	0	
2	1-2	
3	3-5	
4	6-10	
5	11-15	
6	16-20	
7	21 -50	
8	51 – 100	
9	More than 100	

4b. And how many casual/fixed-term contract employees do you have? (SR)

Code	Items	Notes
1	0	
2	1-2	
3	3-5	
4	6-10	
5	11-15	
6	16-20	
7	21 -50	
8	51 – 100	
9	More than 100	

5. How many years has the business been in operation? (SR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Less than 2	
2	2-10	
3	More than 10	

Section 2: The next twelve months

6. In the next 12 months, do you predict any change to your business turnover? (SR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Increase	
2	Decrease	
3	Stay the same	

7. By what approximate percentage do you expect it to [increase/decrease]?

Code	Answers	Notes
1	1% to10%	Show if code 1 or 2 on Q6
2	11% to 20%	
3	21% to 30%	
4	31% to 40%	
5	More than 40%	

8. And in the next 12 months, do you predict your current number of employees will change (SR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Increase	
2	Decrease	
3	No change	

9. By what approximate percentage do you expect it to [increase/decrease]?

Code	Answers	Notes
1	1% to10%	Show if code 1 or 2 on Q8
2	11% to 20%	
3	21% to 30%	
4	31% to 40%	
5	More than 40%	

10. Are you preparing to sell or close your business? (SR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	
2	No	

Section 3: In relation to operating your business

11. What, if anything, do you see as the main opportunities of your business? (TEXT)

Code	Answers	Notes
1		

12. What, if anything, do you see as your main challenges? (TEXT)

Code	Answers	Notes
1		

Section 4: Business Development

14. Do you have a current business plan? (SR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	
2	No	

15. Do you allocate time each year to strategy planning? (SR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	
2	No	

16. Do you have a business resilience/continuity plan? (SR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	
2	No	

17. Do you have an exit plan in place? (SR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	
2	No	

Section 5: Business Promotion

18. How do you advertise your business? (MR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Website	Social Media
2	Facebook	
3	Instagram	

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Newspapers	Print
2	Trade magazines	

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Television	Media
2	Radio	

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Other	Show Please specify box

18a. Please specify:

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Other	

Section 6: Business Trade

19. Which of the following makes up the majority of your business sales? (MR)

Code	Answers	Notes
1	Walk ins	
2	Bookings	
3	Online sales	
4	Return customers	
5	Local customers	
6	Visitors	
7	Word of Mouth	
8	Other	Show Please specify box

19a. Please specify:

Code	Answers	Notes
1		Show If code 8 Q19

20. Finally, is there any support or training that you would like to see offered to businesses such of yours? (TEXT)

Code	Answers	Notes
1		

Thank you for your time and assistance. This market research is carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act, and the information you provided will be used only for research purposes. The research has been conducted by Micromex Research (02 4352 2388) on behalf of Eurobodalla Shire Council.

micromex research

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