



# **BUSINESS SURVEY REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2024**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Hepburn Shire Council initiated the 2024 Business Survey to gain a better understanding of the needs of local businesses. The goal is to synchronise our initiatives with the essential elements necessary for promoting growth and progress in the business sector throughout the shire. Until a new Economic Development Strategy is developed by Council, the survey will identify the primary requirements of businesses through this survey.

## METHODOLOGY

The Business Survey targeted businesses within the Hepburn Shire, reaching 610 subscribers through a direct standalone email to Council's Business eNewsletter. In addition, it was promoted on social media, in Council's Hepburn Life eNewsletter, advertised in The Local newspaper and featured on Council's website. The survey encompassed 44 questions covering various categories:

- Industry type
- Location
- Home-based businesses
- Business costs and revenue
- Challenges faced
- Suppliers
- Customers
- Staff and Employment
- Workshops, training and networking opportunities
- Memberships
- Industry-specific training
- Marketing and development strategies
- Utilisation of Council services

## SURVEY RESPONSES

Council would like to extend their gratitude to all the business owners and operators who took the time to complete our recent business survey. Your participation and feedback are invaluable and play a crucial role in shaping the future support for our local businesses.

We received responses from 67 businesses across the shire, representing approximately 10.98% of those who were directly contacted via the targeted Business eNewsletter. Your willingness to share your insights and experiences has provided us with invaluable data that will inform our decisions and strategies moving forward.

Thank you for also providing free-text comments throughout the survey and at its conclusion. Your additional feedback and input are important to us and we will carefully consider each comment as we work towards enhancing the economic landscape of the Hepburn Shire.

The confidentiality and anonymity of all survey respondents has been meticulously upheld throughout the duration of the survey.

## OUTCOME

Council has reviewed the survey responses which will ensure our work over the next 12-18 months is implemented to reflect the needs of the businesses in the shire. The survey was an opportunity for Council to understand what is considered important for the support, growth and development needs of the local business sectors. An Implementation Plan has been created from the feedback received and is included at the end of this report.

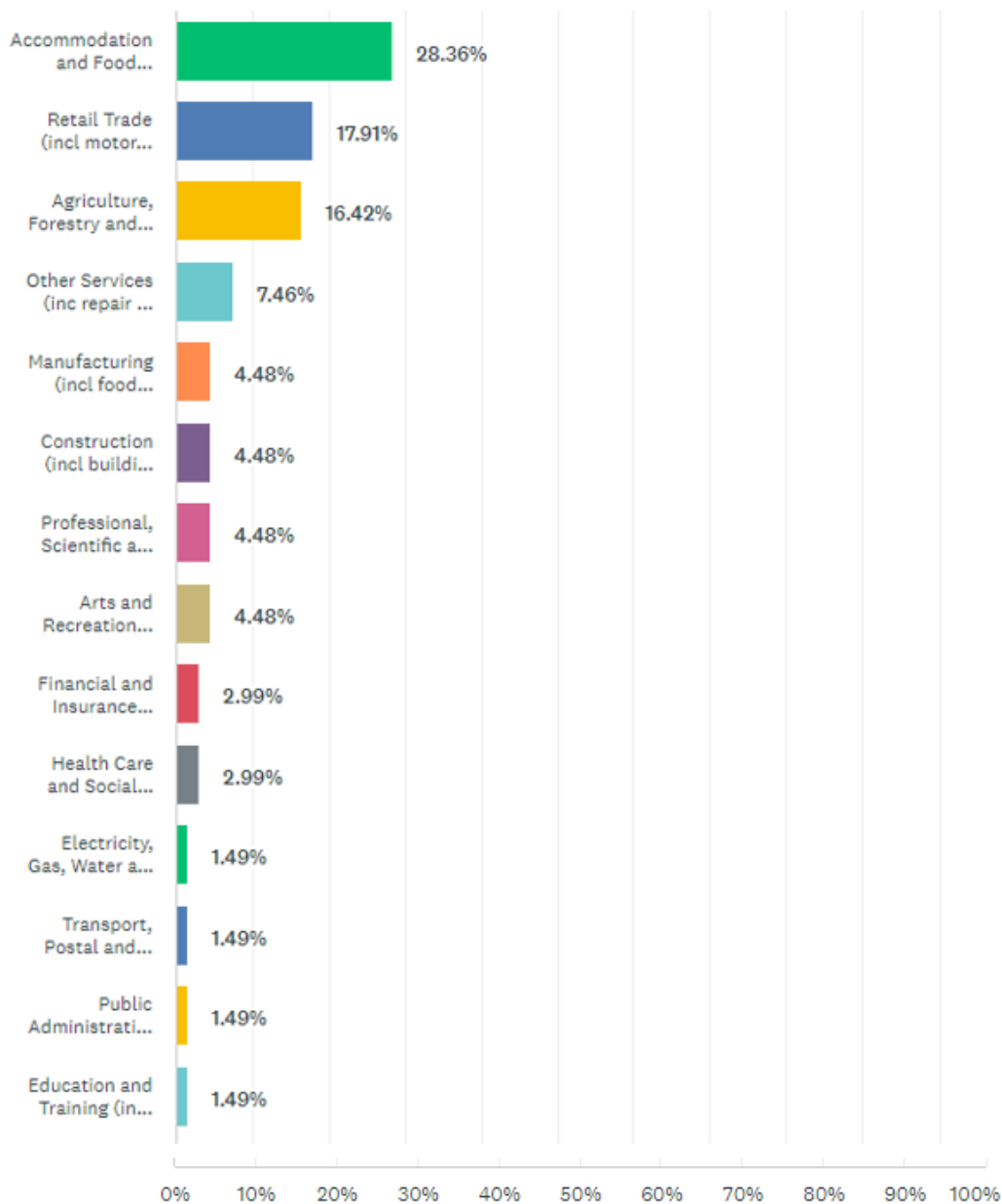
**SURVEY RESPONSES**

**Business industry**

**Q1. Which industry best defines your business?**

Industries were based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) divisions.

The top three industries were Accommodation and Food services, Retail trade and Agriculture and Forestry. There were no responses for Mining, Wholesale Trade, Information Media and Telecommunications, Rental Hiring and Real Estate Services and Administrative and Support Services.



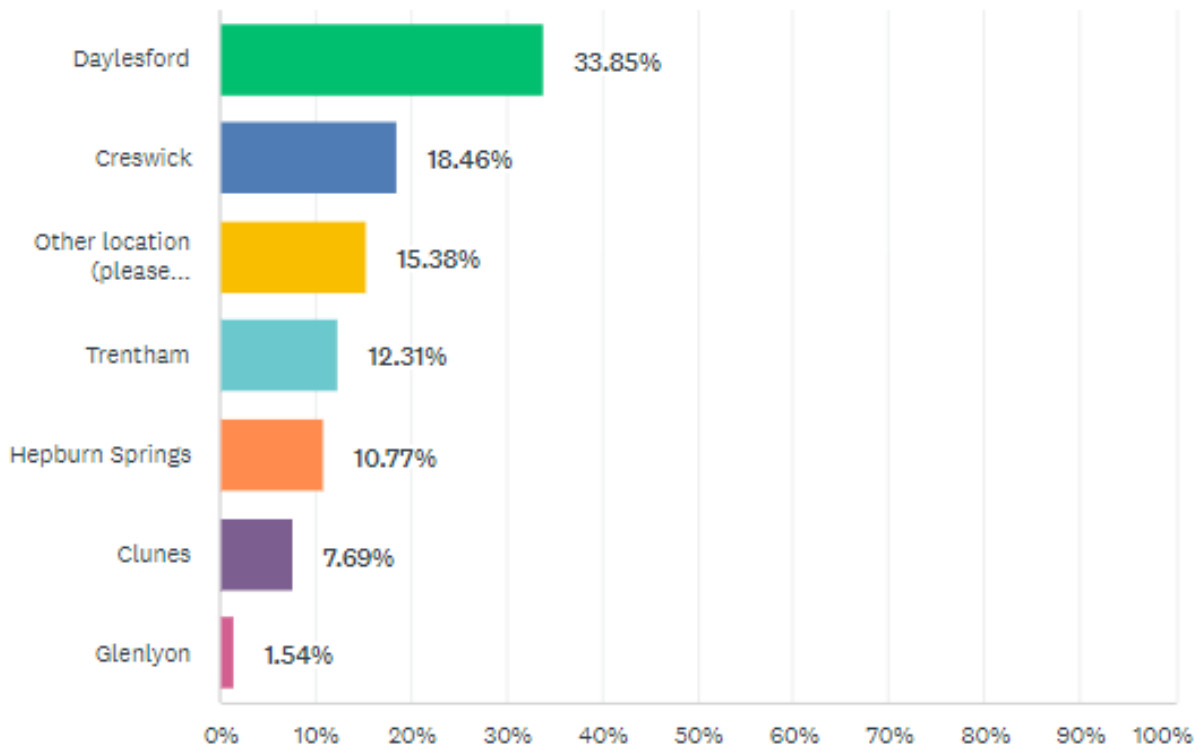
**Q1. Which industry best defines your business? Continued**

	%
Accommodation and Food Services	28.36%
Retail Trade	17.91%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	16.42%
Other Services	7.46%
Manufacturing	4.48%
Construction	4.48%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	4.48%
Arts and Recreation Services	4.48%
Financial and Insurance Services	2.99%
Health Care and Social Assistance	2.99%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1.49%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	1.49%
Public Administration and Safety	1.49%
Education and Training	1.49%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>67</b>

**Business location**

**Q2. In which town does your business primarily operate?**

The survey was completed by 65 businesses across the shire with Daylesford, Creswick and other smaller joint locations identified as the top three.



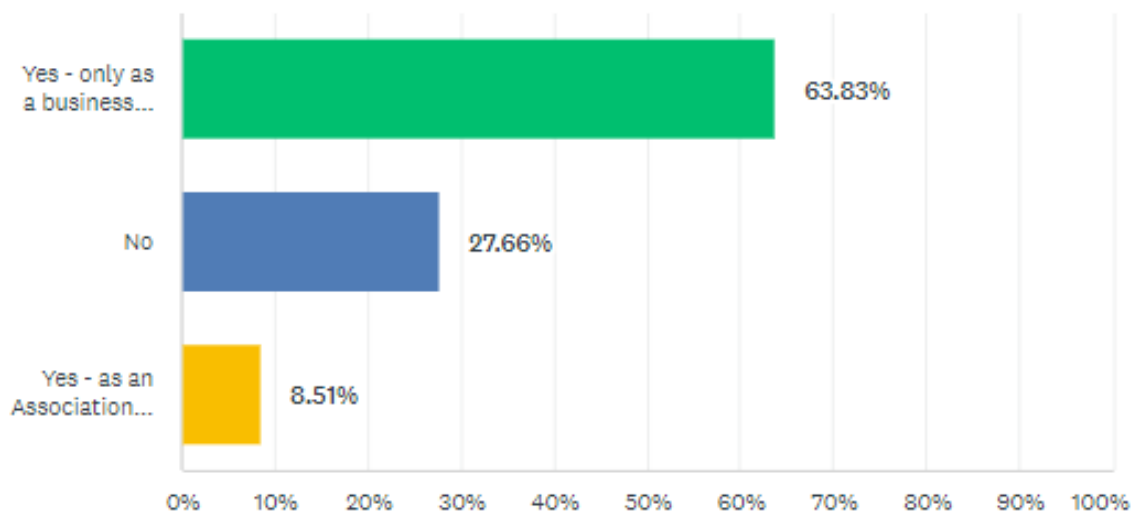
	%
Daylesford	33.85%
Creswick	18.46%
*Other location (please specify)	15.38%
Trentham	12.31%
Hepburn Springs	10.77%
Clunes	7.69%
Glenlyon	1.54%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>65</b>

*\*Other identified locations include Musk, Yandoit, Newlyn, Franklinford and Spring Hill.*

**Q3. If there was a Business Association in your area, would you be interested in joining?**

This question was only applicable to those who identified their business as being located in Daylesford, Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon and Trentham. Business Associations are already available to join in Creswick and Clunes.

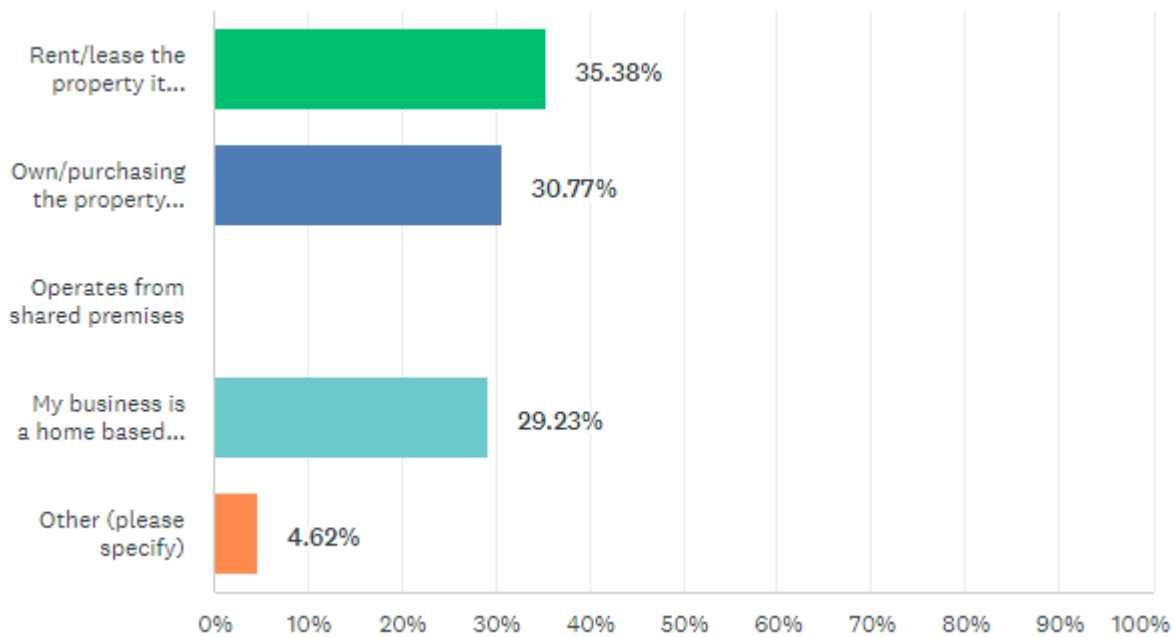
There was a strong response to those interested in becoming a member of an association but only a small number willing to be involved as a President, Secretary or Treasurer.



	%
Yes – only as a business member	63.83%
No	27.66%
Yes – as an Association member (i.e. President, Secretary, Treasurer)	8.51%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>47</b>

**Q4. Does your business?**

The survey identified a relatively even split between businesses who are renting/leasing their premises, businesses who own or are purchasing and home-based businesses.



	%
Rent/lease the property it operates from	35.38%
Own/purchasing the property it operates from	30.77%
My business is a home-based business	29.23%
Other (please specify)	4.62%
Operates from shared premises	0%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>65</b>

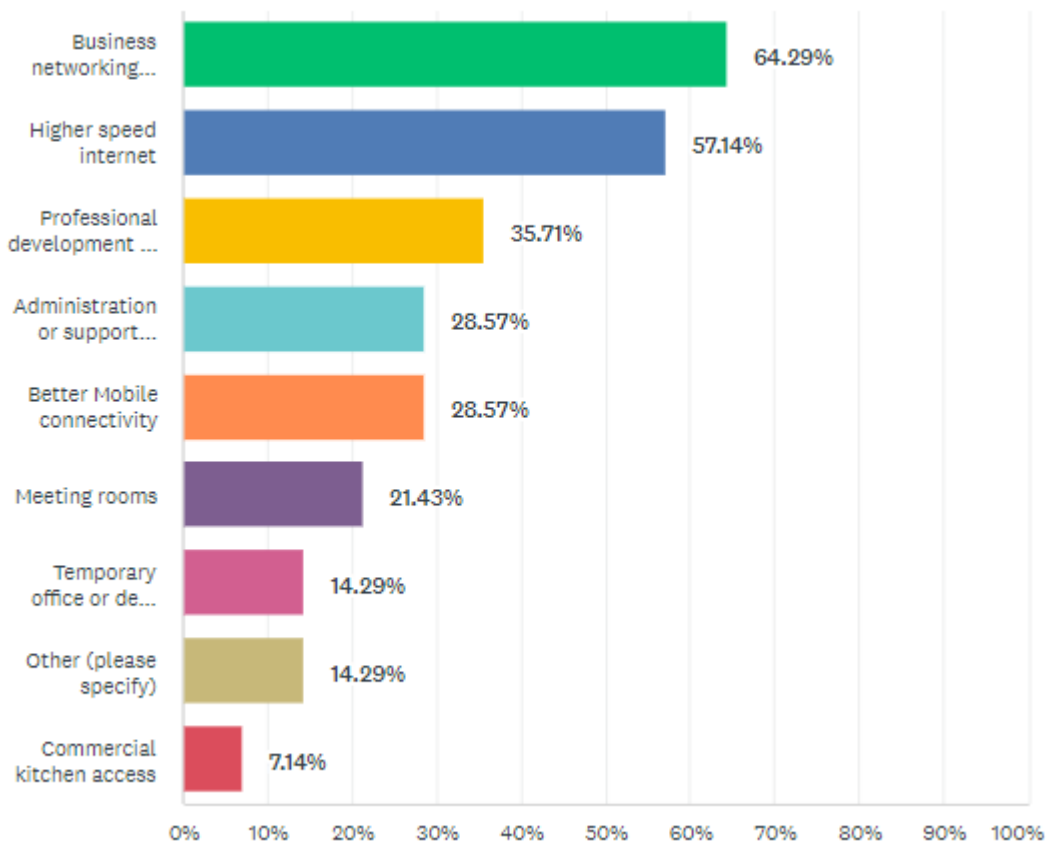


**Home-based businesses**

**Q5. As a home-based business which services below would benefit your business?**

This question was only applicable to those who run home-based businesses with 14 responses received.

Home-based businesses identified business networking, higher speed internet access and professional development as their top three services that would benefit their business.

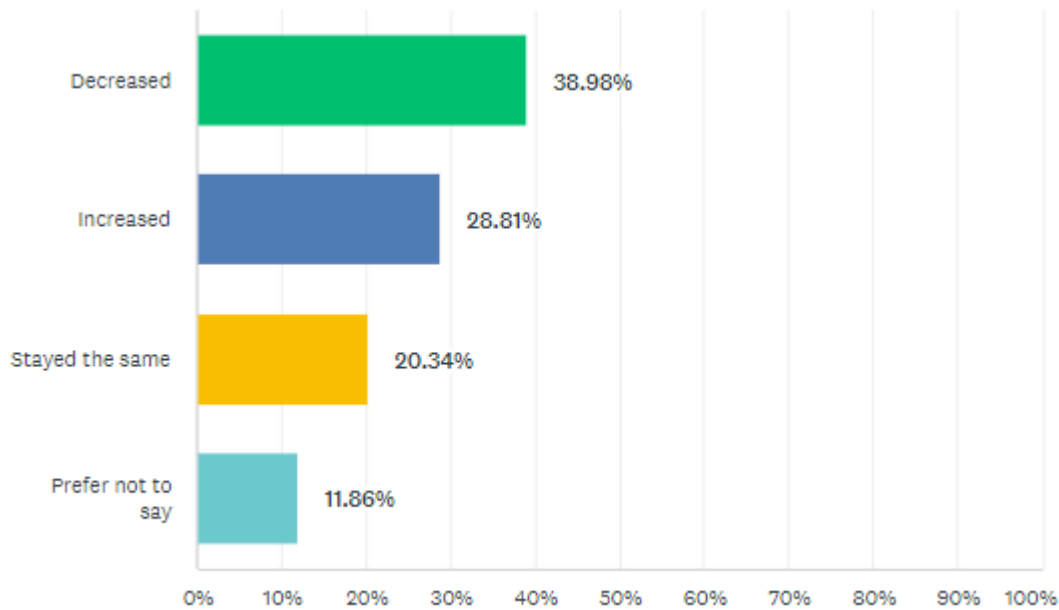


	%
Business networking opportunities	64.29%
Higher speed internet	57.14%
Professional development & training	35.71%
Administration or support services	28.57%
Better mobile connectivity	28.57%
Meeting rooms	21.43%
Temporary office or desk space	14.29%
Other (please specify)	14.29%
Commercial kitchen access	7.14%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>14</b>

**Business costs/revenue**

**Q6. Regarding your business, over the past year, has your net revenue increased, decreased or stayed the same?**

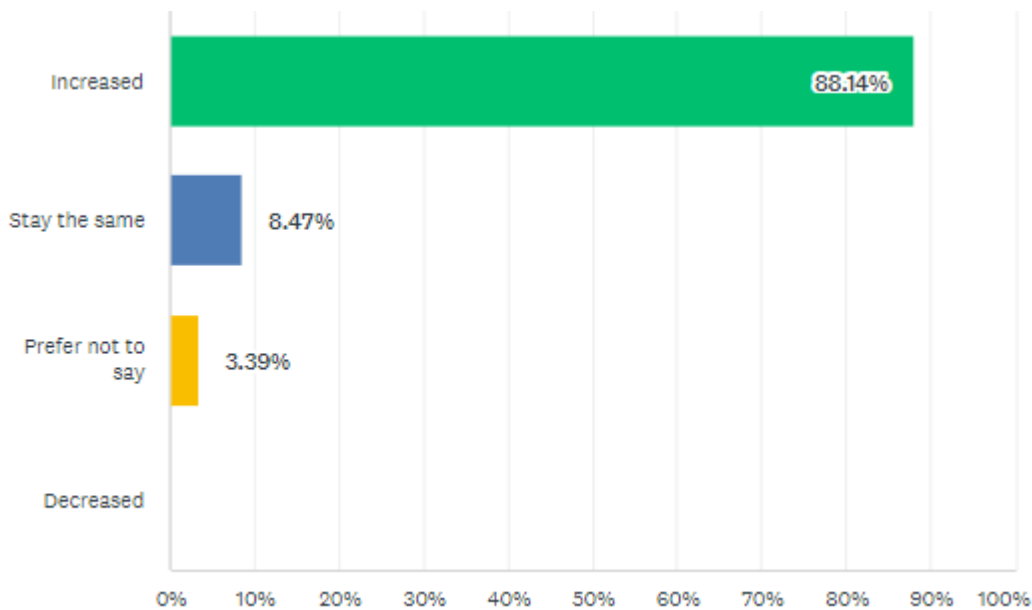
Whilst some businesses have seen a decrease in net revenue others have seen an increase or stayed the same.



	%
Decreased	38.98%
Increased	28.81%
Stayed the same	20.34%
Prefer not to say	11.86%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>59</b>

**Q7. Over the past year, have your net costs increased, decreased or stayed the same?**

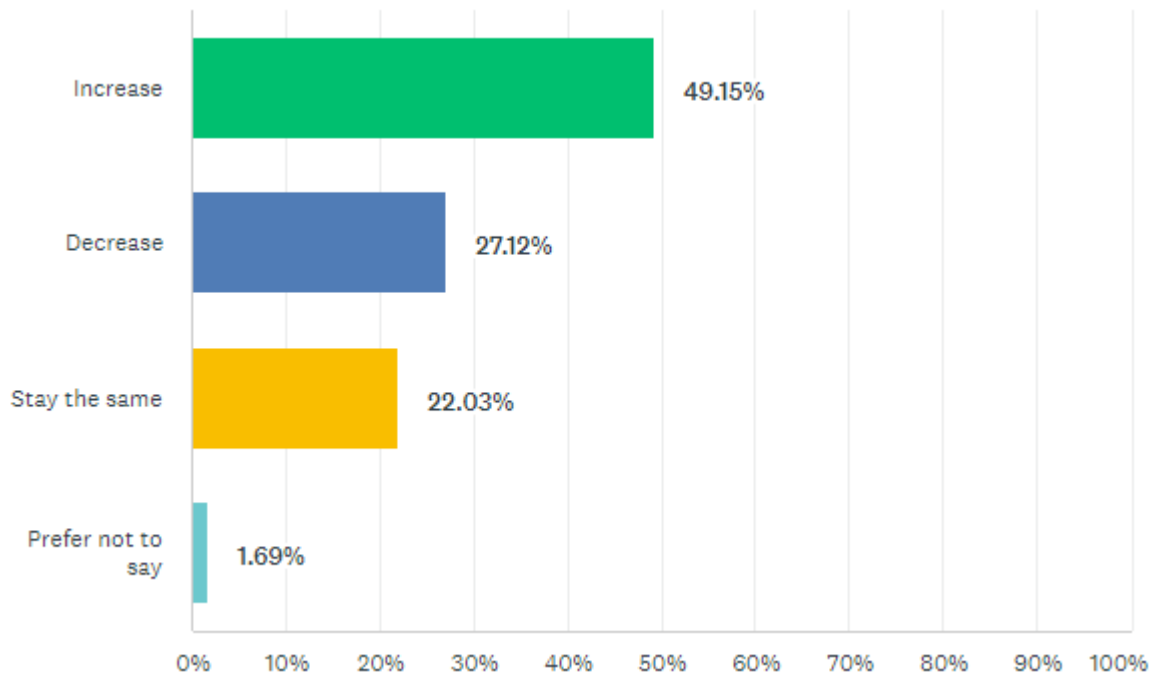
Over 88% of businesses that responded to this question have identified an increase in net costs in the past year, this question was relative to all industries.



	%
Increased	88.14%
Stay the same	8.47%
Prefer not to say	3.39%
Decreased	0%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>59</b>

**Q8. Looking to the next year, do you expect to increase, decrease or maintain your business profit?**

Just under 50% of businesses expect their next year’s income to increase whilst there is roughly an even split between those expecting a decrease and staying the same.

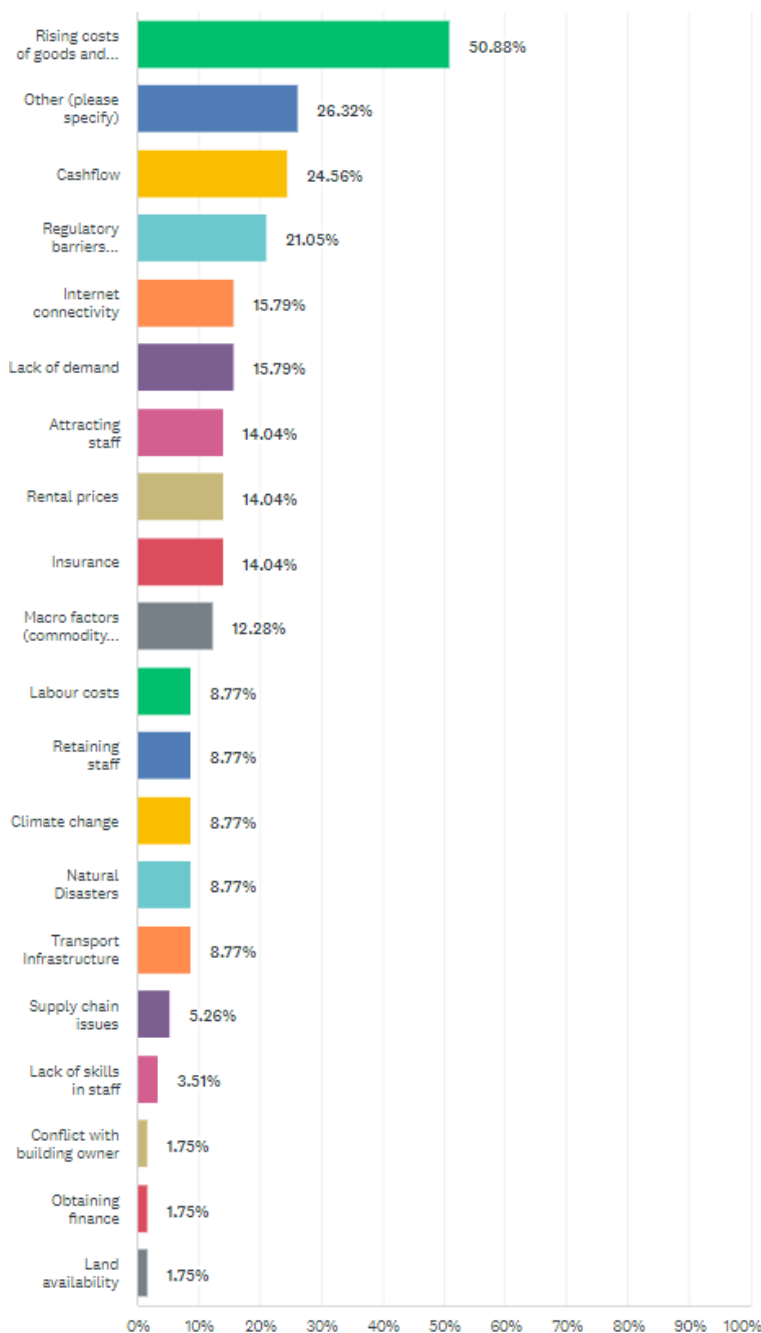


	%
Increase	49.15%
Decrease	27.12%
Stay the same	22.03%
Prefer not to say	1.69%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>59</b>

## Challenges

### Q9. What are the key challenges you currently face in your business? (select your top 3)

The rising costs of goods and services were selected as the highest key challenge for businesses. Increased costs for food, stock, insurances, interest rates, taxes, property rent and/or rates, power and gas. Staff wages came in second and cashflow third as a key challenge.



**Q9. What are the key challenges you currently face in your business? (select your top 3) - Continued**

	%
Rising costs of goods and products	50.88%
* Other (please specify)	26.32%
Cashflow	24.56%
Regulatory barriers (permits etc)	21.05%
Internet connectivity	15.79%
Lack of demand	15.79%
Attracting staff	14.04%
Rental prices	14.04%
Insurance	14.04%
Macro factors (commodity prices / political environment)	12.28%
Labour costs	8.77%
Retaining staff	8.77%
Climate change	8.77%
Natural disasters	8.77%
Transport Infrastructure	8.77%
Supply chain issues	5.26%
Lack of skills in staff	3.51%
Conflict with building owners	1.75%
Obtaining finance	1.75%
Land availability	1.75%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>59</b>

*\*Other identified as electricity and gas costs, power outages, cost of living, interest rates, increase in operating costs, taxes and advertising.*

**Q10. Are there any additional comments or detail on the above you would like to make?**

The comments received related to a range of different key challenges than those identified in the previous question.

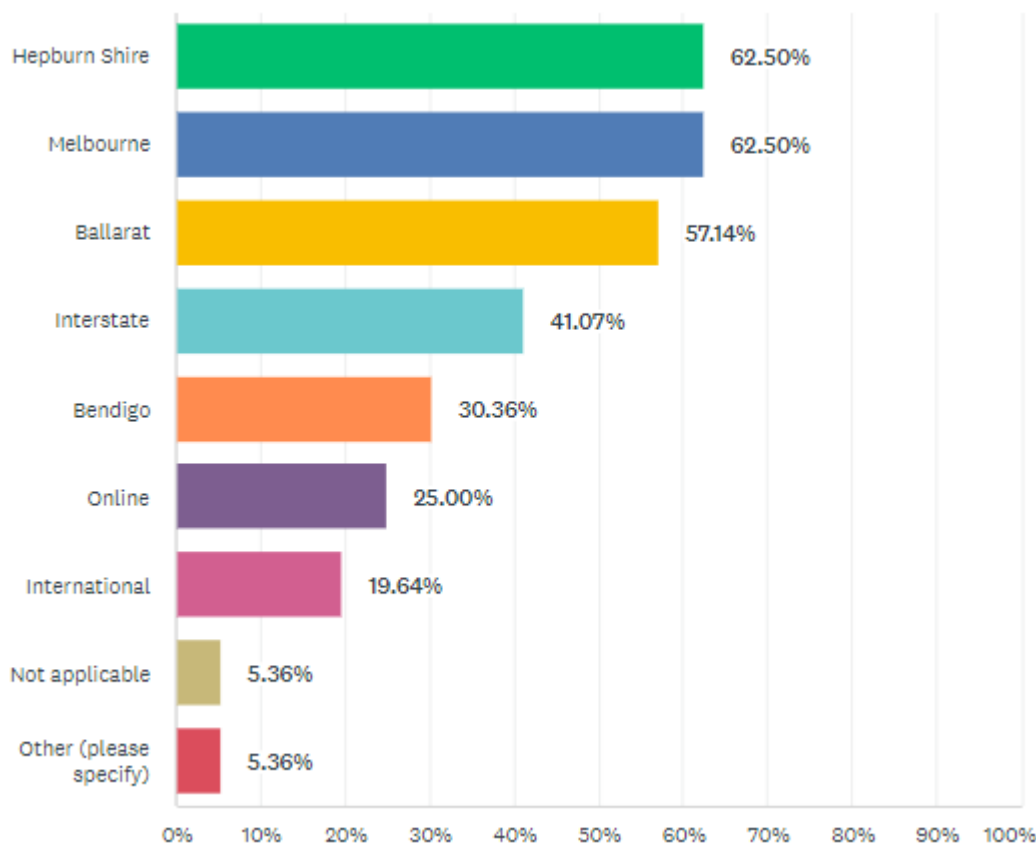
These included:

- Additional public toilets for Daylesford.
- Sole trader exposure challenges due to limited budget for shop front, advertising and reliance on accommodation providers to offer services to guests.
- Lack of mobile reception and slow internet.
- Affordable housing and lack of affordable rental properties.
- No funding available for infrastructure, phone/internet, power or road upgrades.
- Local markets supporting local businesses to pay a reduced amount to those from outside the shire.
- Lack of affordable rental properties and housing affordability for rentals.
- Increased rates for agricultural areas.
- Ensuring Council has appropriate land zones relevant to soil type, protects the most productive land from inappropriate development and challenges with lifestyle properties being located in farming zones.
- Adapting transitioning and upgrading to new technologies including solar power and batteries, refrigeration, farm machinery, water saving, testing and usage, waste recycling, phasing out plastics, protecting native animals and fauna, fire protection - cultural burns.
- Cost effective freight options to get products delivered to stores in Victoria and interstate.
- Increase in costs of packaging and ingredients.
- Council planning, building and enforcement challenges to businesses.
- Directional signage to entice visitor to Howe Street shops.
- Empty shop fronts.
- Land erosion due to site flooding making business sites unusable.

**Business suppliers**

**Q11. Which location (s) do your suppliers operate? (select all that apply)**

Businesses were able to select all supplier locations for this question. Hepburn Shire and Melbourne were each identified as 62.50% with Ballarat coming in third at 57.14%.



	%
Hepburn Shire	62.50%
Melbourne	62.50%
Ballarat	57.14%
Interstate	41.07%
Bendigo	30.36%
Online	25.00%
International	19.64%
Not applicable	5.36%
Other (please specify)	5.36%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>56</b>



**Q12. Are there gaps in products or services locally that prevent you from using more local suppliers?**

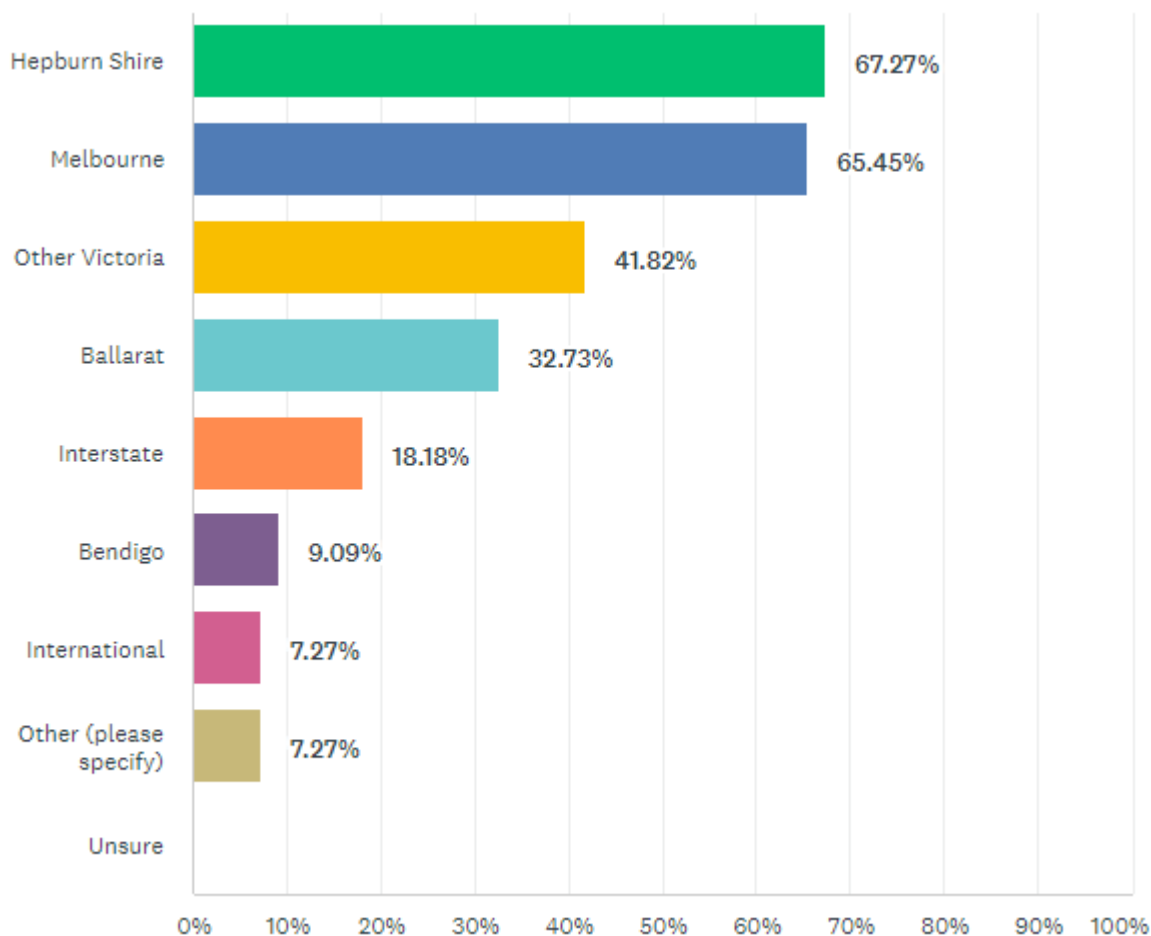
Comments provided by businesses on the gaps for using more local suppliers were:

- Local businesses being able to access Hepburn Energy supplies.
- Limited choice of local products.
- Suppliers for accommodation linen, print, packaging and solar products.
- Availability of local qualified trades people.
- Affordable laundries.
- Local manufacturers for required products do not exist locally.

**Business customers**

**Q13. Where are your customers primarily located? (select max 3)**

Businesses were able to select their top three customers locations. Hepburn Shire came in at the top of the list at 67.27%, Melbourne at 65.45% and other Victorian locations at 41.82%.



	%
Hepburn Shire	67.27%
Melbourne	65.45%
*Other Victoria	41.82%
Ballarat	32.73%
Interstate	18.18%
Bendigo	9.09%
International	7.27%
Other (please specify)	7.27%
Unsure	0%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>55</b>

\*Other identified as Macedon Ranges, Geelong and Mt Alexander.

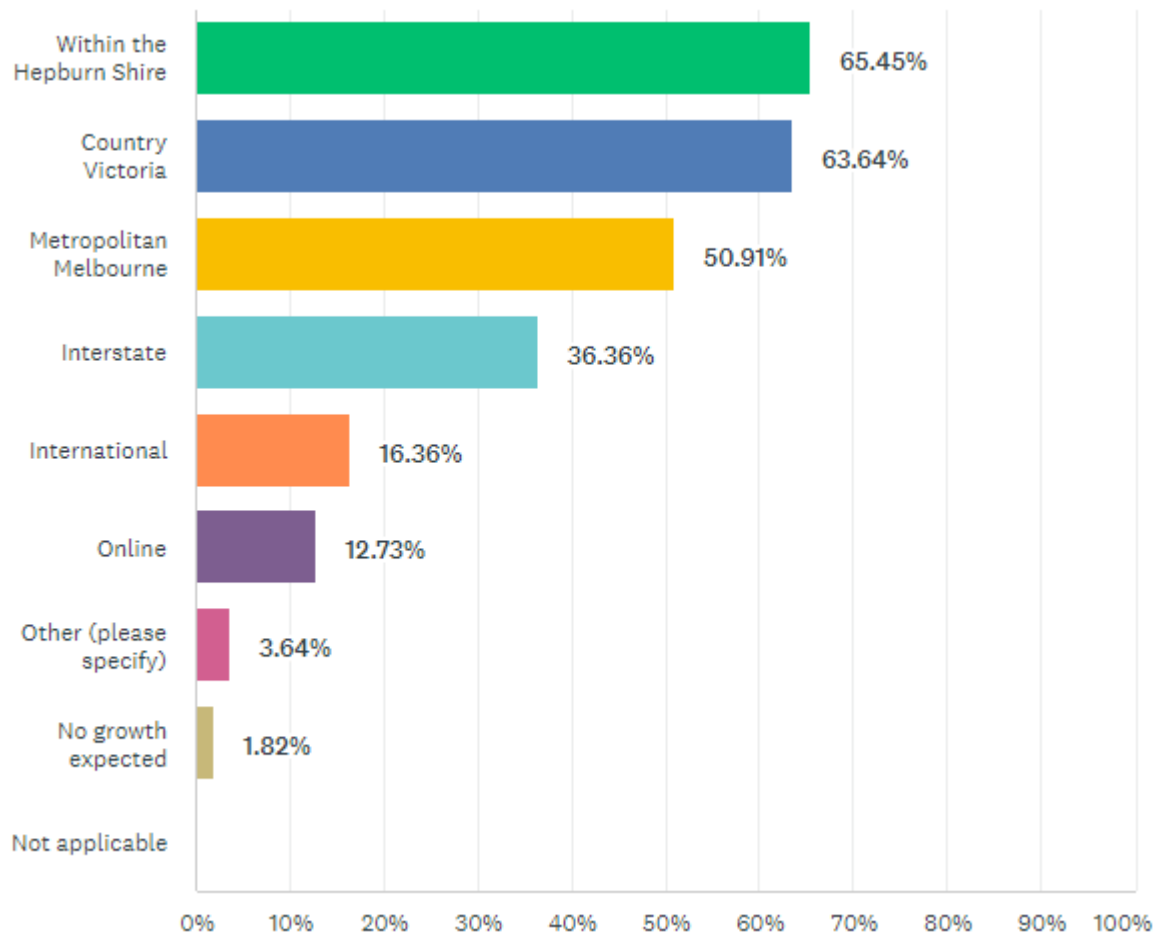
**Q14. What would assist you to build your local customer base?**

Businesses were able to provide comments on what their individual businesses require assistance with to assist them to build their local customer base. Below are the responses supplied:

- The feedback strongly supported a Local Business Directory.
- Business collaboration across the shire i.e. connecting with accommodation providers to include or offer local produce for guests and local businesses stocking local suppliers.
- Supporting local businesses to encourage the community to buy locally.
- A greater awareness of how the community benefits when spending locally.
- Funding or support opportunities for businesses to make buildings more accessible i.e. ramps and handrails.
- Other comments focused on social media support, advertising tools, marketing exposure, local business networks, promoting recreational opportunities, information on the identity of Hepburn Shire's gastronomy, food manufacturers and agricultural artisanal products.
- A spread of businesses open across the whole of the week.
- Local businesses supporting and stocking local suppliers.
- Promoting and opening of new tourist attractions i.e. bike trails.
- Providing supplies for locals that are price sensitive given the economic challenges.
- Permit relief.
- Appropriate signage.

**Q15. Which of these customer markets do you hope to grow in the next 2 years? (select all relevant)**

65.45% of the businesses who responded to this question hoped to grow their local business across the Hepburn Shire with 63.64% in country Victoria and 50.19% in metropolitan Melbourne.



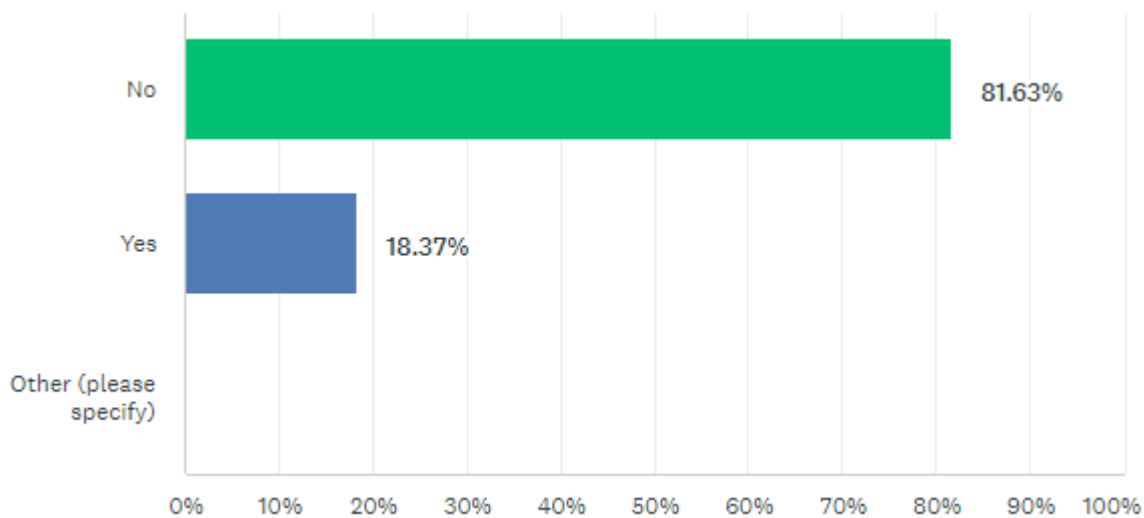
	%
Within the Hepburn Shire	65.45%
Country Victoria	63.64%
Metropolitan Melbourne	50.91%
Interstate	36.36%
International	16.36%
Online	12.73%
Other (please specify)	3.64%
No growth expected	1.82%
Not applicable	0%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>55</b>

**Q16. If you trade internationally, please list countries you export to.**

There were only a few responses to international trade with Indonesia being the only country identified.

**Q17. Would your business be interested in additional or new export opportunities?**

A large majority 81.63% of business who answered this question were not interested in export opportunities either new or additional with only 18.37% saying this is something their business would like to look at further.

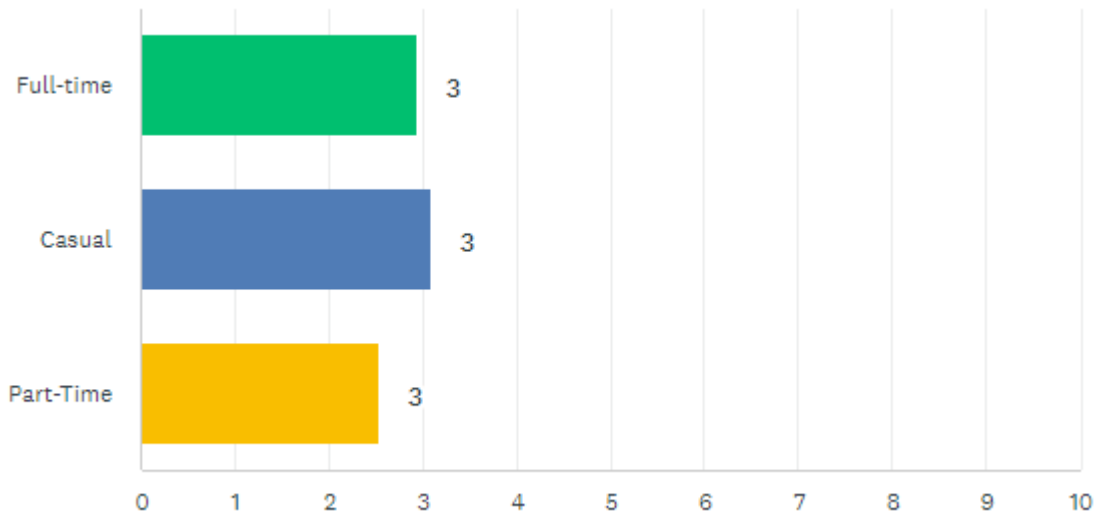


	%
No	81.63%
Yes	18.37%
Other (please specify)	0%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>49</b>

**Staff employment**

**Q18. How many staff does your business employ?**

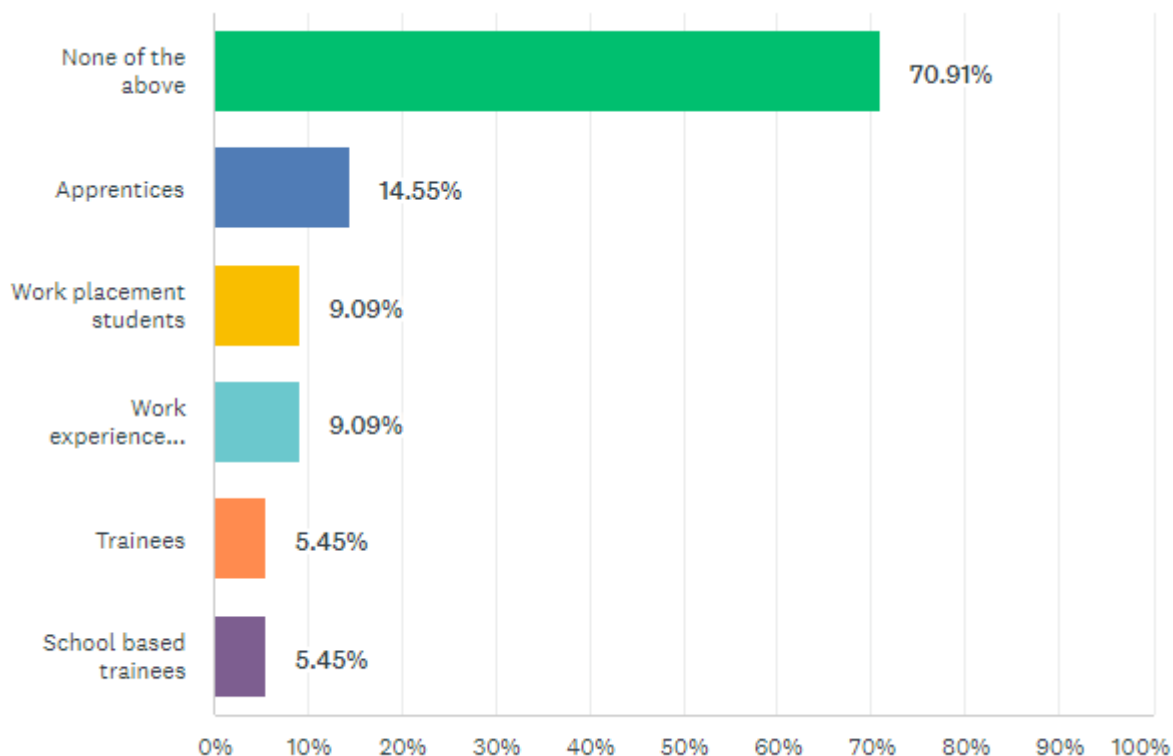
The average staff numbers were identified as three across each full-time, casual and part-time.



	Average No
Full-time	3
Casual	3
Part-time	3
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>55</b>

**Q19. Do you employ any of the following (tick all applicable)?**

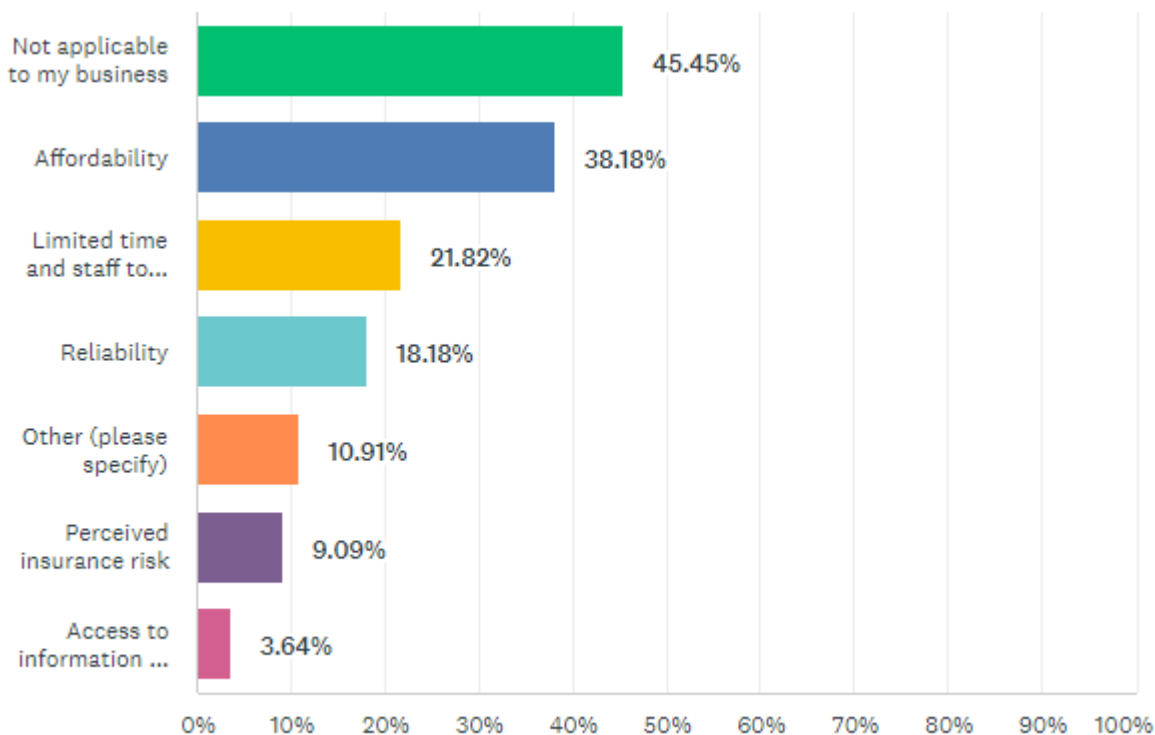
This question identified whether local businesses employed any staff that were undertaking apprenticeships/traineeships or accessing work placement or experience. 70.91% of businesses did not employ any of the identified employee types listed with 14.55% employing apprentices with work placement and experience students coming in at 9.09% each.



	%
None of the above	70.91%
Apprentices	14.55%
Work placement students	9.09%
Work experience students	9.09%
Trainees	5.45%
School based trainees	5.45%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>55</b>

**Q20. What are the barriers to you employing any of the above?**

The majority of businesses 45.45% stated that this type of employment was not relevant to their business with 38.18% highlighting affordability was a barrier and 21.82% saying they have limited time and staff to provide training to these employees.

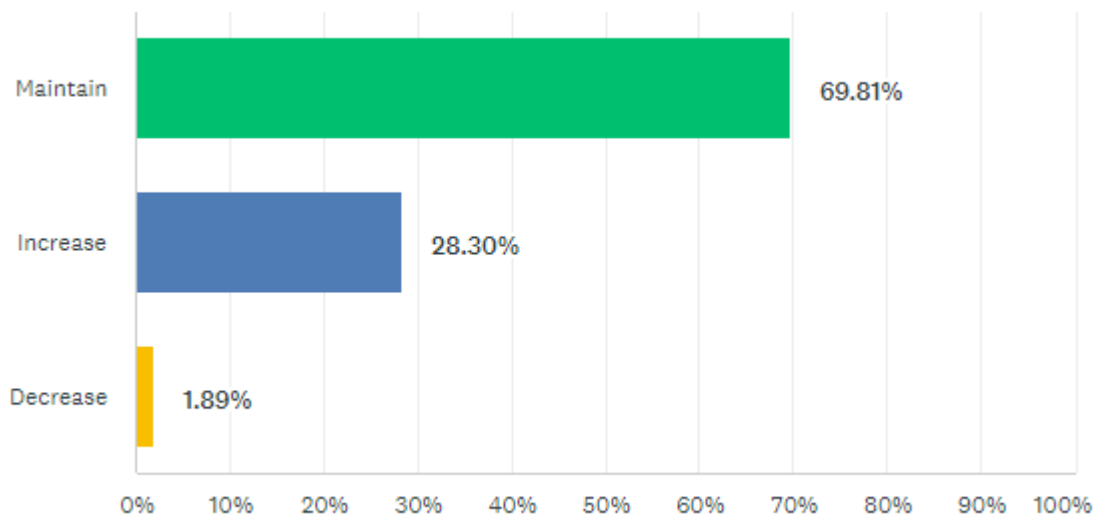


	%
Not applicable to my business	45.45%
Affordability	38.18%
Limited time and staff to provide training	21.82%
Reliability	18.18%
Other (please specify)	10.91%
Perceived insurance risk	9.09%
Access to information or support	3.64%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>55</b>



**Q21. In the coming year, do you expect to increase, decrease or maintain staffing levels (total FTE)?**

Of the 53 businesses who completed this question 69.81% expected to maintain their current staffing levels which was a great response identifying staff job security.

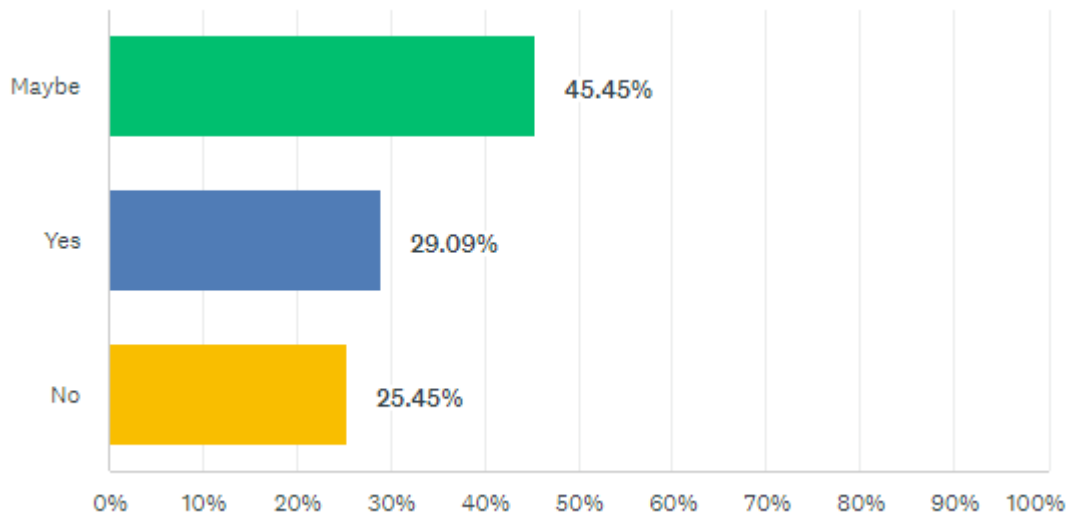


	%
Maintain	69.81%
Increase	28.30%
Decrease	1.89%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>53</b>

**Business workshops and training**

**Q22. Would your business/staff be interested in general business workshops or webinars?**

45.45% of businesses identified they may be interested in workshops or webinars with 29.09% saying they would be and 25.45% stating they would not be interested.

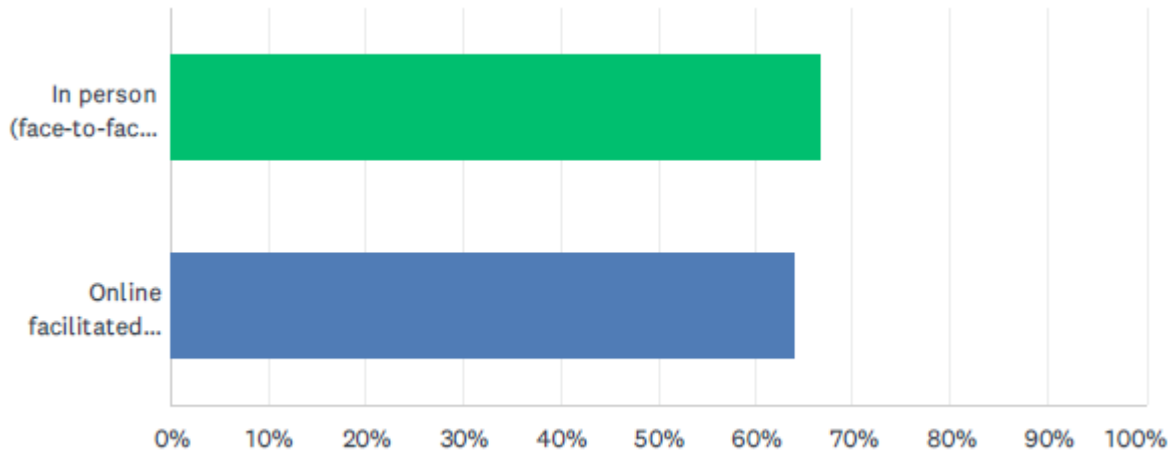


	%
Maybe	45.45%
Yes	29.09%
No	25.45%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>55</b>

**Business workshops**

**Q23. How would you like to attend business workshops or webinars?**

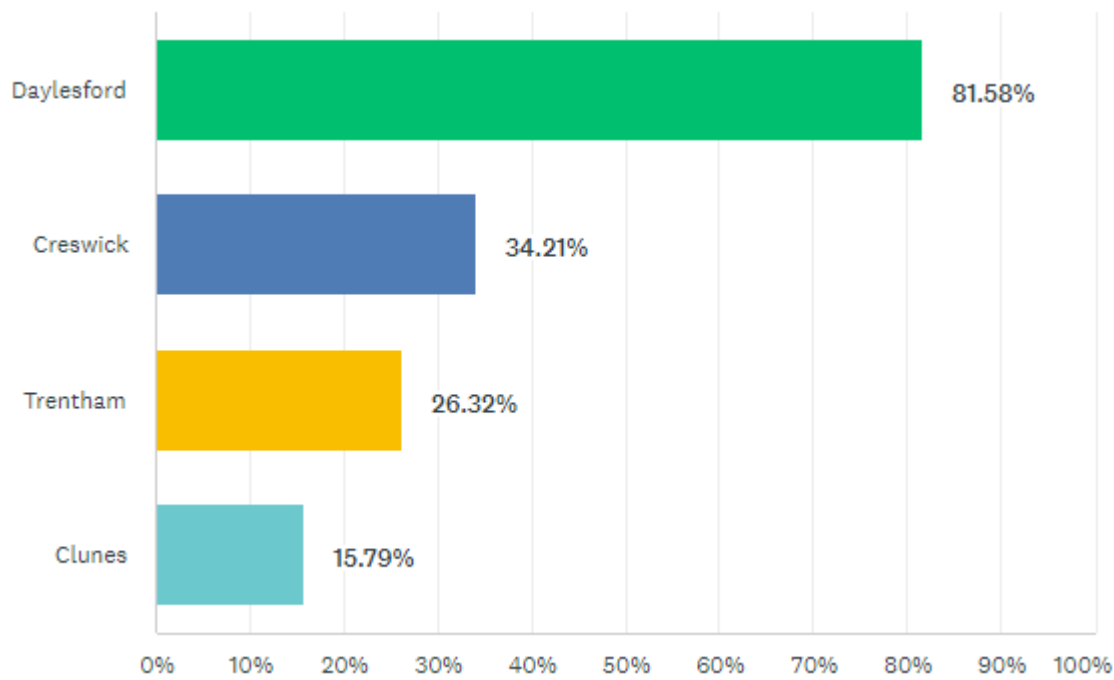
Businesses were able to select both if they would be available to attend either. Of the 36 businesses that identified their interest 66.57% said they would like in person workshops and 63.89% preferred online.



	%
In person (face-to-face) facilitated workshops	66.57%
Online facilitated webinars or workshops	63.89%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>36</b>

**Q24. Where would you attend in person workshops?**

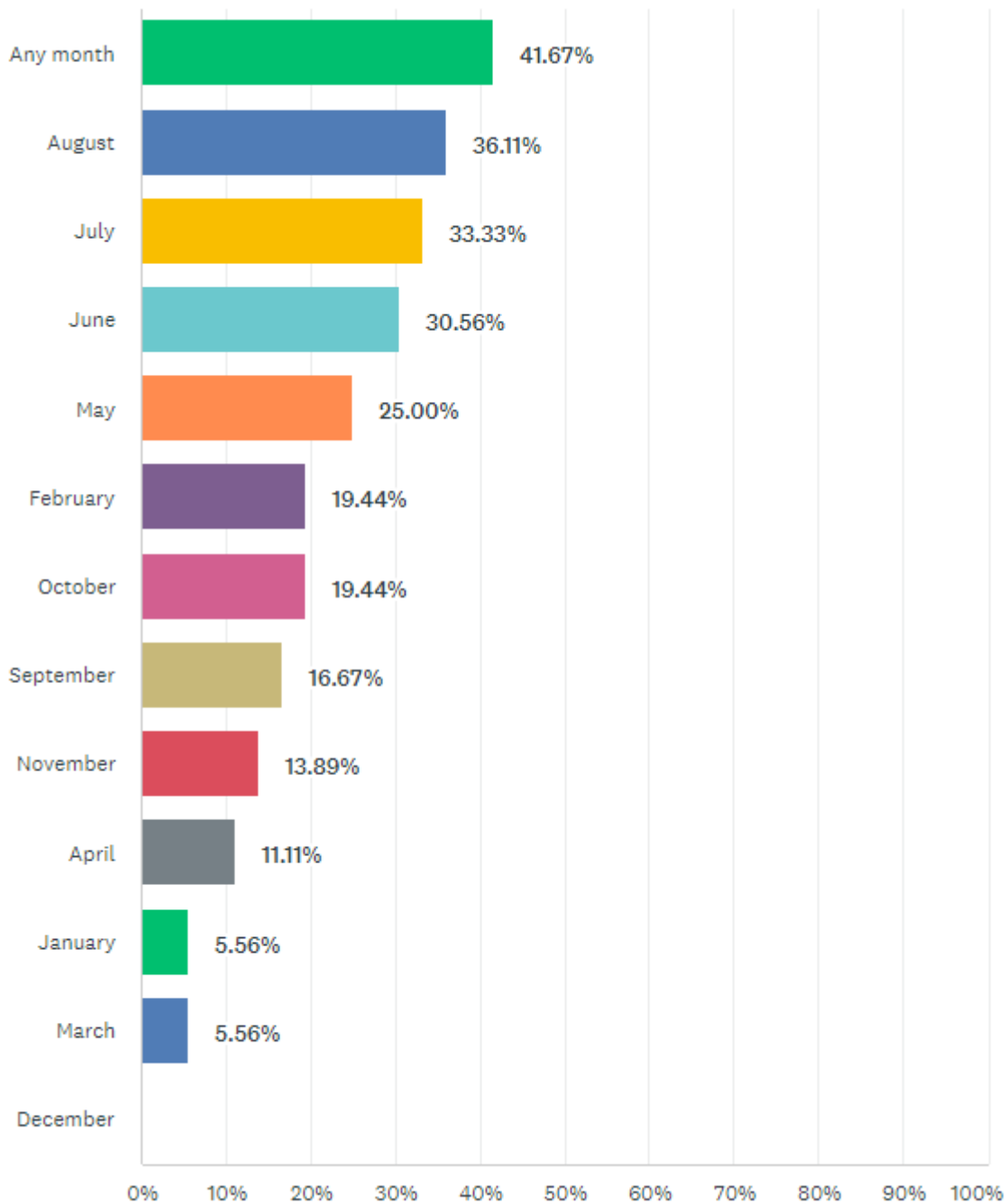
Businesses were able to select multiple locations for in person workshops. Daylesford was highly preferred at 81.58% with Creswick at 34.21% and Trentham at 26.32%.



	%
Daylesford	81.58%
Creswick	34.21%
Trentham	26.32%
Clunes	15.79%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>38</b>

**Q25. What months would suit you best to attend an in person workshop? (select all relevant)**

Respondents could select all months that suited them to attend in person workshops with 41.67% selecting any month, August coming in as the second preference at 36.11% and July at 33.33%.

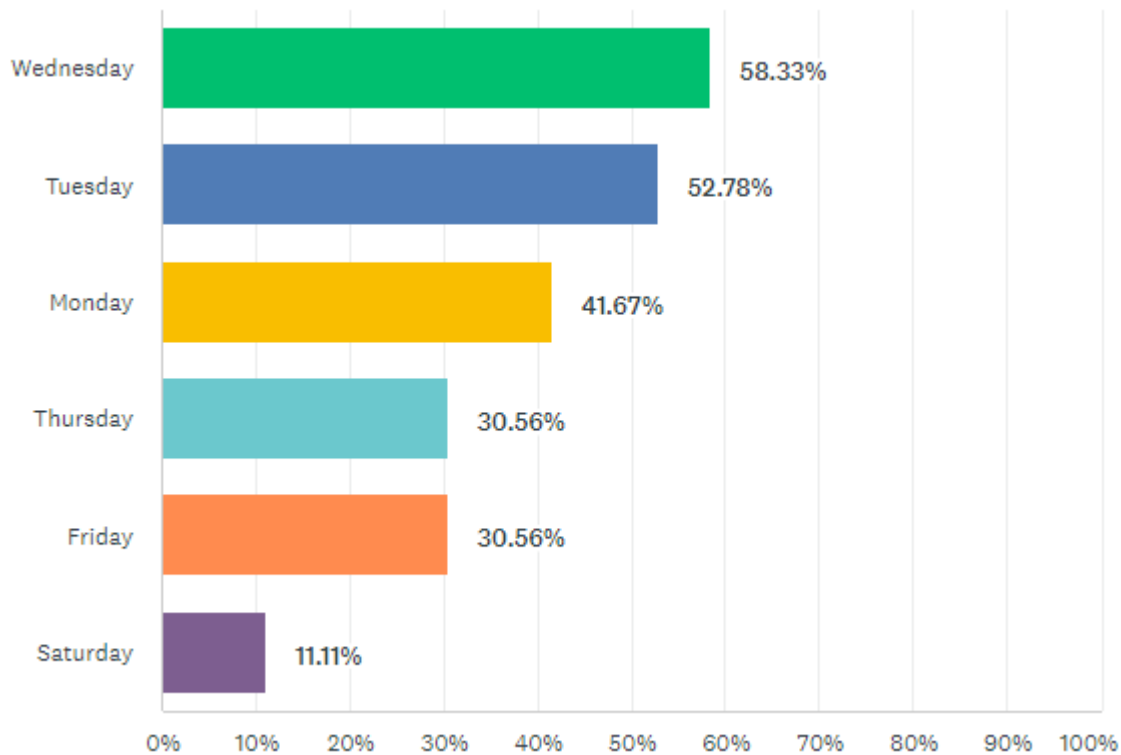


**Q25. What months would suit you best to attend an in person workshop? (select all relevant) - Continued**

	%
Any month	41.67%
August	36.11%
July	33.33%
June	30.56%
May	25.00%
February	19.44%
October	19.44%
September	16.67%
November	13.89%
April	11.11%
January	5.56%
March	5.56%
December	0%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>36</b>

**Q26. What day would suit you best for in person workshops? (select all relevant)**

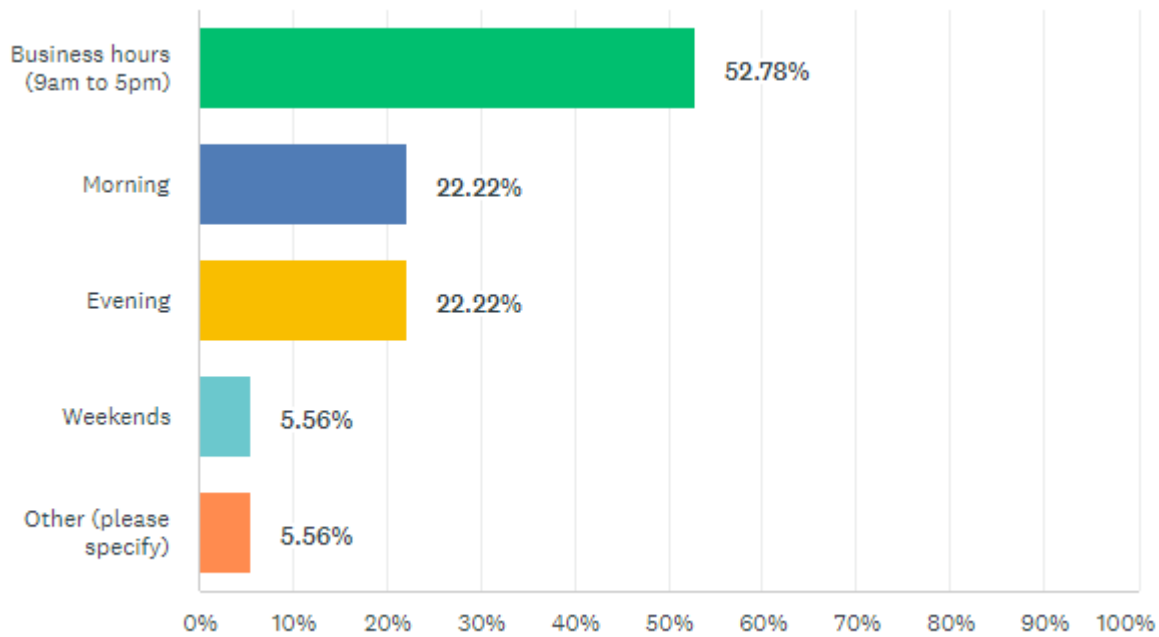
Wednesday was identified as the preferred day of the week for in person workshops with Tuesday coming in closely behind at 52.8% and Mondays at 41.67%.



	%
Wednesday	58.33%
Tuesday	52.78%
Monday	41.67%
Thursday	30.56%
Friday	30.56%
Saturday	11.11%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>36</b>

**Q27. What times would suit you best for in person workshops?** (Please note workshop times vary from 1 to 4 hours)

The best time identified for in person workshops was during business hours at 52.78%, with the next two preferred being morning and evening both being 22.22%.

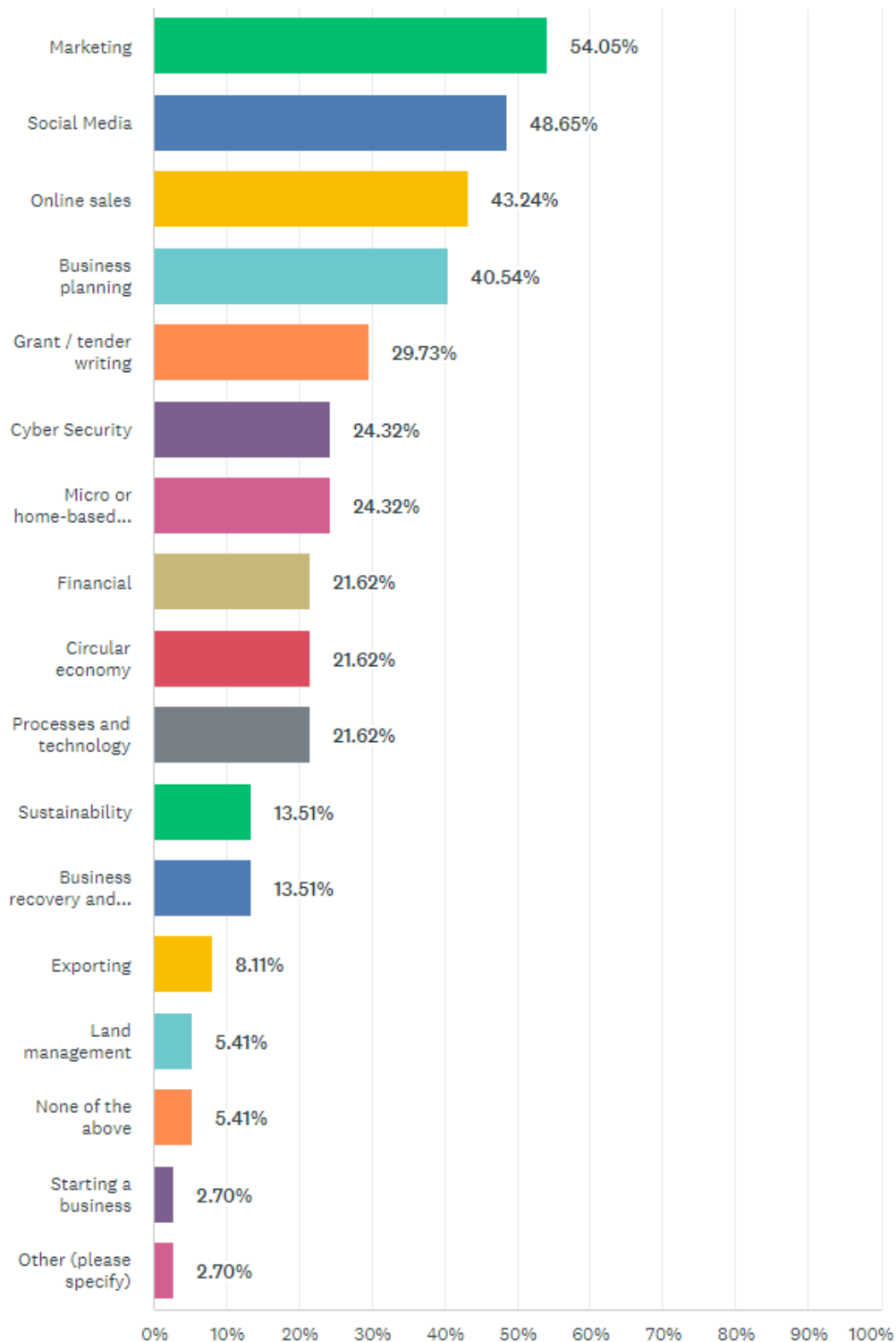


	%
Business hours (9am to 5pm)	52.78%
Morning	22.22%
Evening	22.22%
Weekends	5.56%
Other (please specify)	5.56%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>36</b>



**Q28. What subjects would you like workshops/webinars to focus on? (select all relevant)**

Respondents clearly identified marketing, social media, online sales and business planning as their top priorities for workshop or webinar subjects.



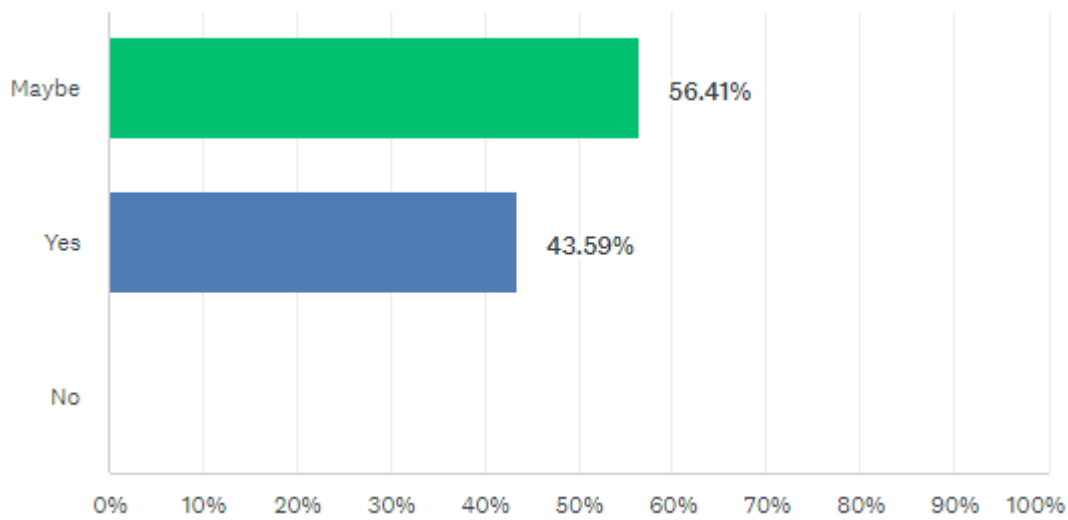
**Q28. What subjects would you like workshops/webinars to focus on? (select all relevant) - Continued**

	%
Marketing	54.05%
Social media	48.65%
Online sales	43.24%
Business planning	40.54%
Grant / tender writing	29.73%
Cyber security	24.32%
Micro or home-based business	24.32%
Financial	21.62%
Circular economy	21.62%
Processes and technology	21.62%
Sustainability	13.51%
Business recovery and disaster planning	13.51%
Exporting	8.11%
Land management	5.41%
None of the above	5.41%
Starting a business	2.70%
Other (please specify)	2.70%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>37</b>

**Networking events**

**Q29. Would you attend casual business networking events if Council provided them?**

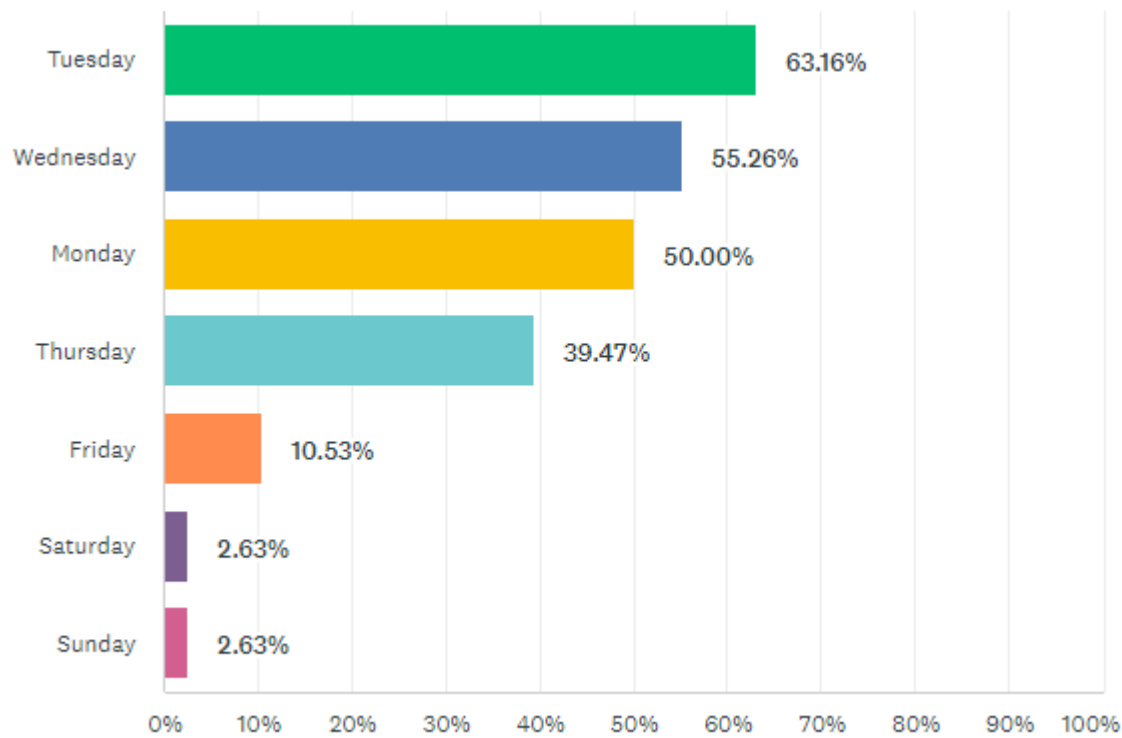
This question identified that only 56.41% of businesses **may** attend a casual business networking event with 43.59% confirming they would.



	%
Maybe	56.41%
Yes	43.59%
No	0%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>39</b>

**Q30. What evening in the week would you be most likely to attend a networking event? (select up to 3)**

Businesses identified Tuesday, Wednesday and Monday being the preferred evening for a networking event.

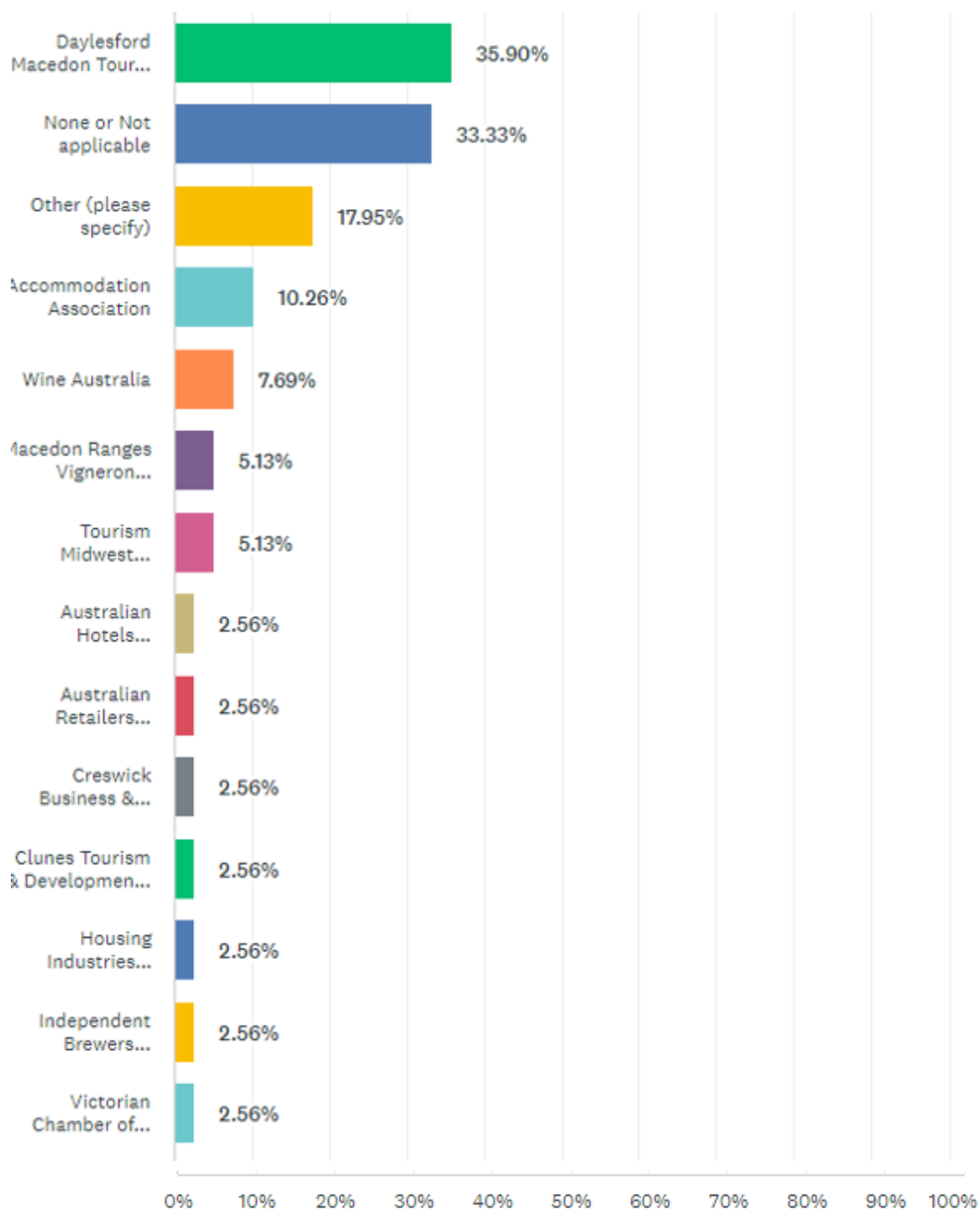


	%
Tuesday	63.16%
Wednesday	55.26%
Monday	50%
Thursday	39.47%
Friday	10.53%
Saturday	2.63%
Sunday	2.63%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>38</b>

**Network or organisation member?**

**Q31. Is your business a member of a network or organisation? (select multiples if applicable)**

There were 39 responses to this question with 35.90% of respondents stating they were a member of Daylesford Macedon Tourism (DMT), 33.33% not a member of any network or organisation and 17.95% members of other industry specific associations or organisations not identified.



**Q31. Is your business a member of a network or organisation? (select multiples if applicable) - Continued**

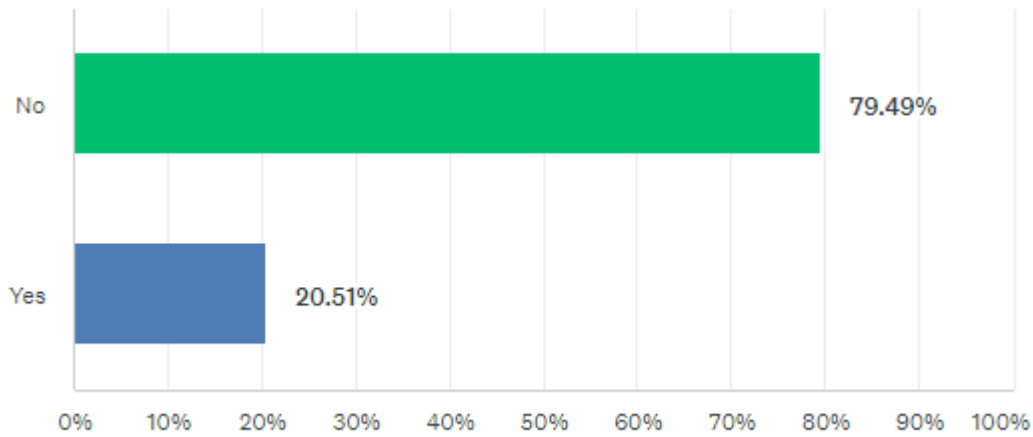
	%
Daylesford Macedon Tourism (DMT)	35.90%
None or not applicable	33.33%
*Other (please specify)	17.95%
Accommodation Association	10.26%
Wine Australia	7.69%
Macedon Ranges Vignerons Association (MRVA)	5.13%
Tourism MidWest Victoria (TMV)	5.13%
Australian Hotels Association (AHA)	2.56%
Australian Retailers Association (ARA)	2.56%
Creswick Business & Tourism Association	2.56%
Clunes Tourism & Development Association	2.56%
Housing Industries Association (HIA)	2.56%
Independent Brewers Association (IBA)	2.56%
Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)	2.56%
Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC)	2.56%
Australian Distillers Association	0%
Cider Australia	0%
Master Builders Association (MBA)	0%
Master Electricians Australia	0%
National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA)	0%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>39</b>

\*Other identified as Book people, MLA, National Association for Visual Arts, Regional Arts Victoria, Vic Parks Association, Berry Industry, Australian Design Association, Commence Ballarat, Art Money, Vic Arts, Victorian Transport Association.

**Industry specific training**

**Q32. Does your business use any industry specific training providers?**

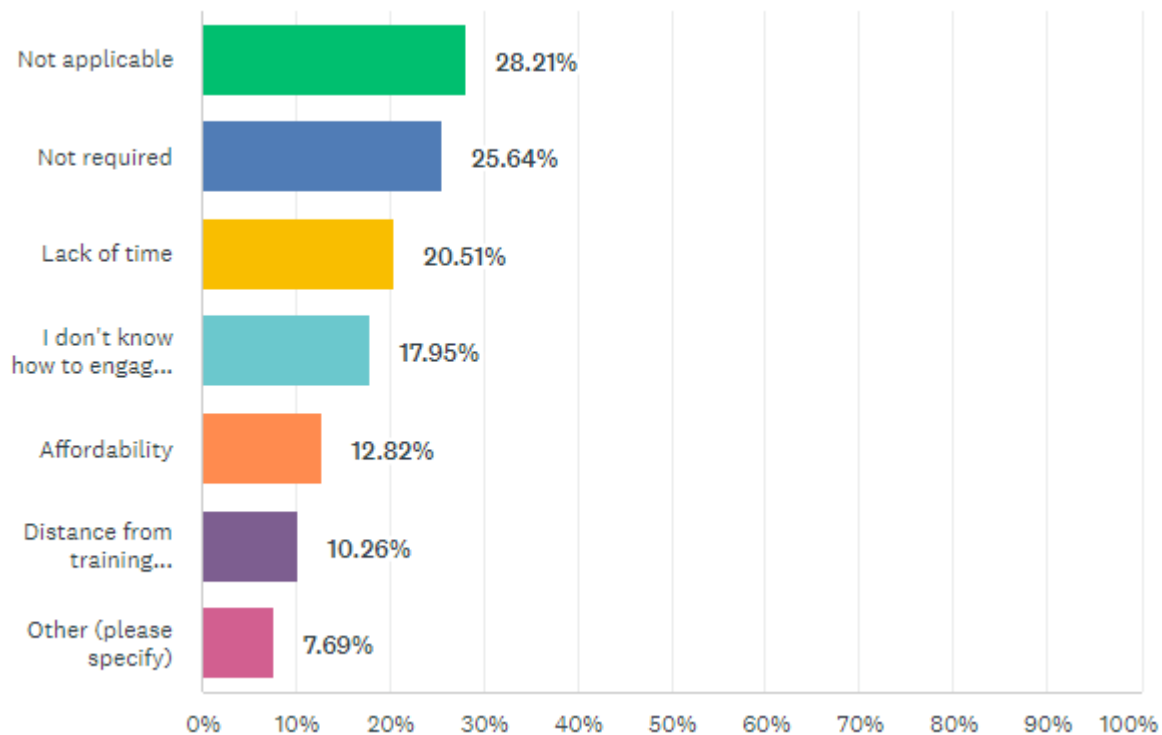
This question identified that the majority of local businesses do not undertake any industry specific training.



	%
No	79.49%
Yes	20.51%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>39</b>

**Q33. What are the main barriers that prevent your business from utilising industry specific training providers?**  
(select all relevant)

Over 50% of businesses stated that industry specific training was not applicable or not required for their business. 20.51% of businesses stated a lack of time as a main barrier.

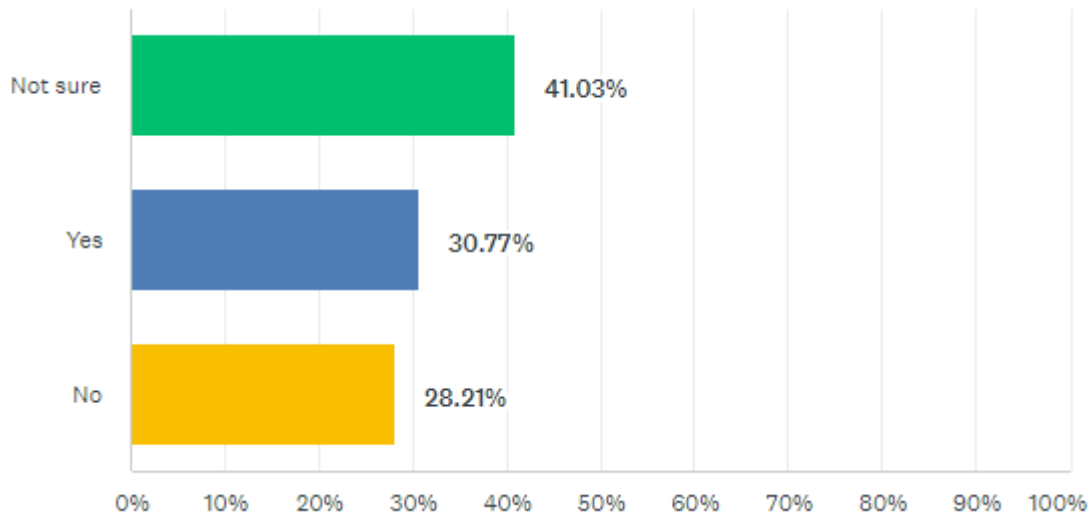


	%
Not applicable	28.21%
Not required	25.64%
Lack of time	20.51%
I don't know how to engage with this	17.95%
Affordability	12.82%
Distance from training providers	10.26%
Other (please specify)	7.69%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>39</b>



**Q34. Would your business benefit from additional industry specific training?**

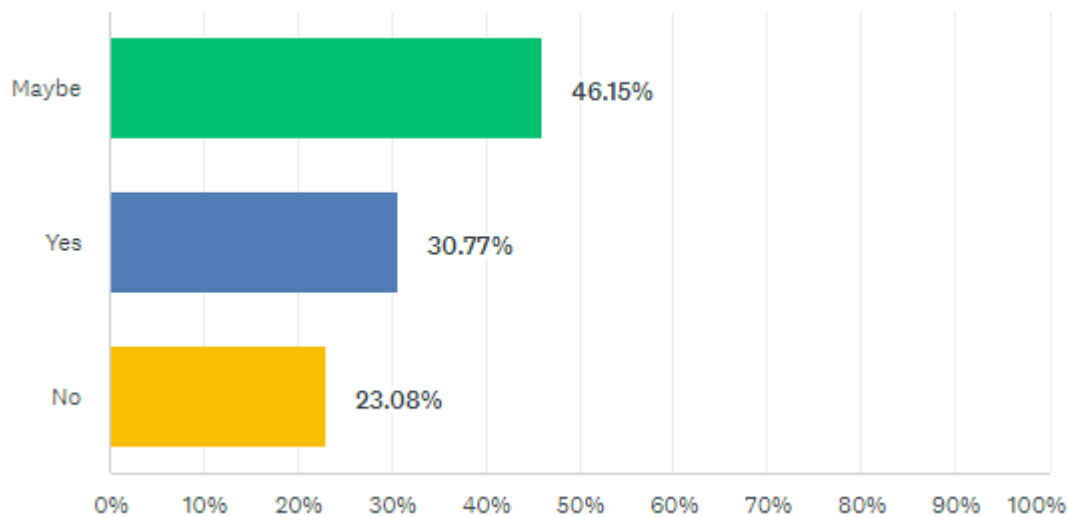
Only 30.77% of businesses identified industry specific training would be beneficial to their business.



	%
Not sure	41.03%
Yes	30.77%
No	28.21%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>39</b>

**Q35. Would you or your staff attend additional industry specific training?**

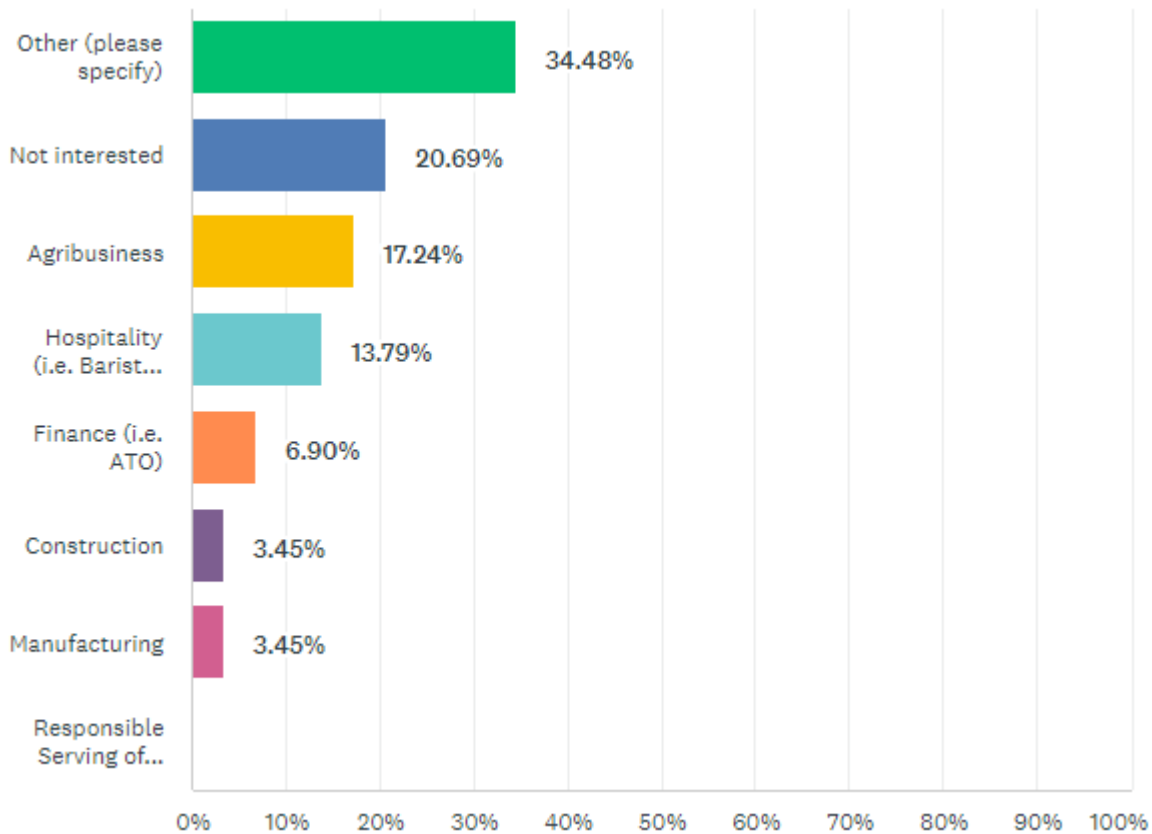
Only 30.77% of respondents selected that they would be attend industry specific training with 46.15% being a maybe and 23.08% selecting they would not attend.



	%
Maybe	46.15%
Yes	30.77%
No	23.08%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>39</b>

**Q36. What industry specific training would your business be interested in?**

The majority of responses were other training which included retail, handling aggressive customers, infection control, mental health, arts, viticulture, compliance and safety. 20.69% of businesses were not interested in any training.

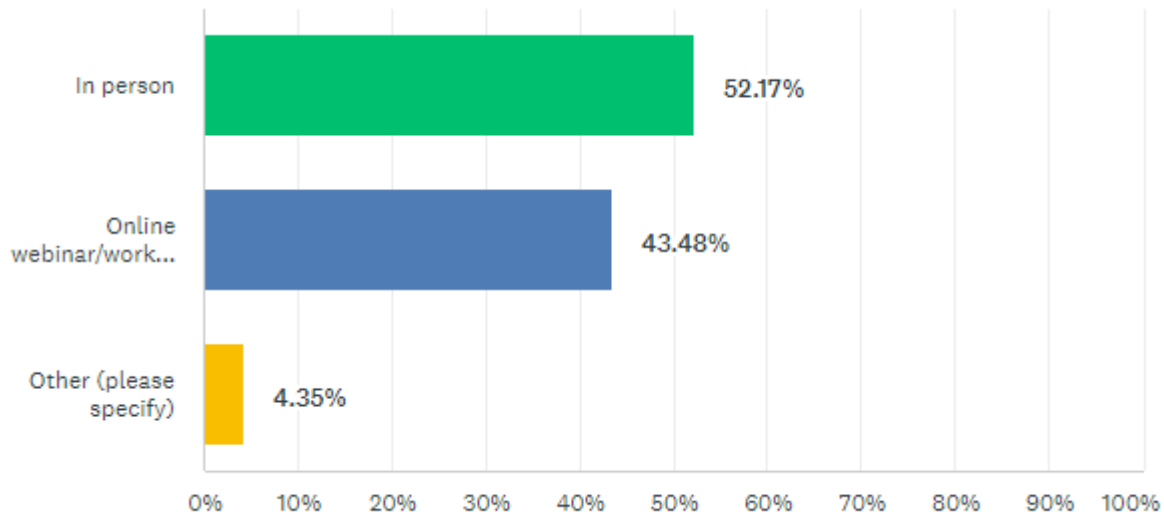


	%
*Other (please specify)	34.48%
Not interested	20.69%
Agribusiness	17.24%
Hospitality (i.e. Barista, RSA)	13.79%
Finance (i.e. ATO)	6.90%
Construction	3.45%
Manufacturing	3.45%
Responsible serving of alcohol (RSA)	0%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>29</b>

*\*Other identified include retail, communication (handling difficult customers), upskilling, infection control, arts industry training, finance, manufacturing, agribusiness, design, compliance and safety.*

**Q37. If yes, how would you like to attend?**

Those interested in industry specific training identified in person and online would be attended.



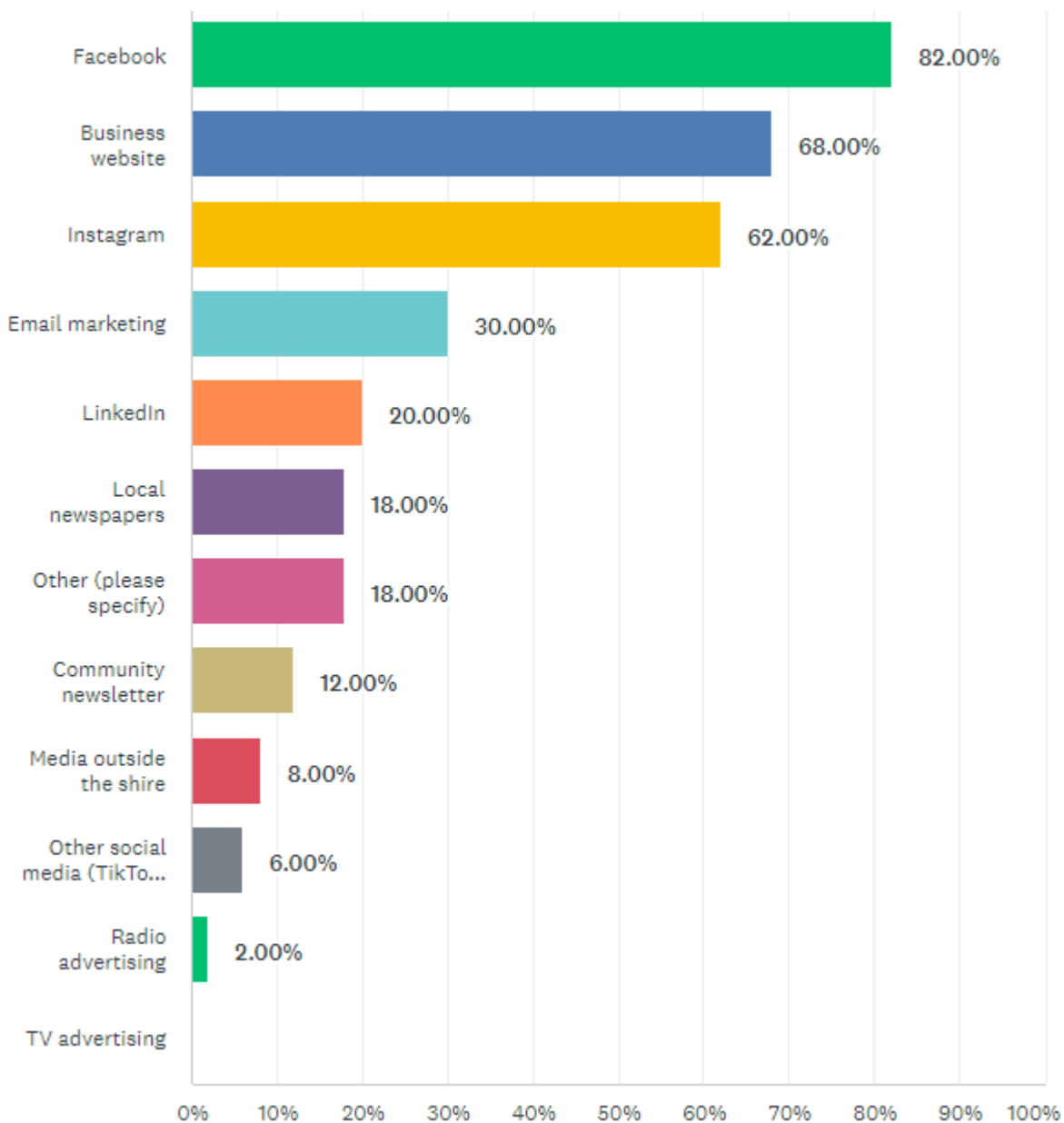
	%
In person	52.17%
Online webinar/workshop	43.48%
*Other (please specify)	4.35%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>23</b>

*\*Other identified as either way.*

**Business marketing and development**

**Q38. What platforms do you currently use to promote your business? (select all relevant)**

Facebook was identified as the main platform for business promotion with a business website and Instagram in the top three.

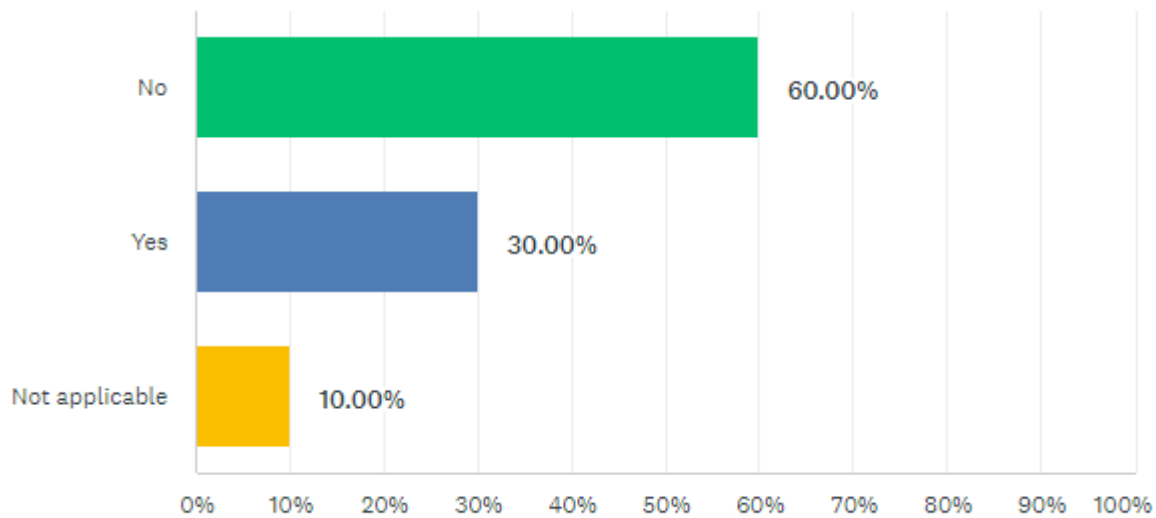


**Q38. What platforms do you currently use to promote your business? (select all relevant) - Continued**

	%
Facebook	82.00%
Business website	68.00%
Instagram	62.00%
Email marketing	30.00%
LinkedIn	20.00%
Local newspapers	18.00%
Other (please specify)	18.00%
Community newsletter	12.00%
Media outside the shire	8.00%
Other social media (TikTok, Twitter etc.)	6.00%
Radio advertising	2.00%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>50</b>

**Q39. Does your business have a continuity/emergency management plan?** (Plan can assist to set out a strategy for business continuity if impacted by a disaster, emergency etc.)

Only 30% of businesses in the shire have a plan to guide and assist them if they are impacted by a disaster or emergency. There is an opportunity to encourage businesses to implement a plan to lessen the impact should any emergencies arise.

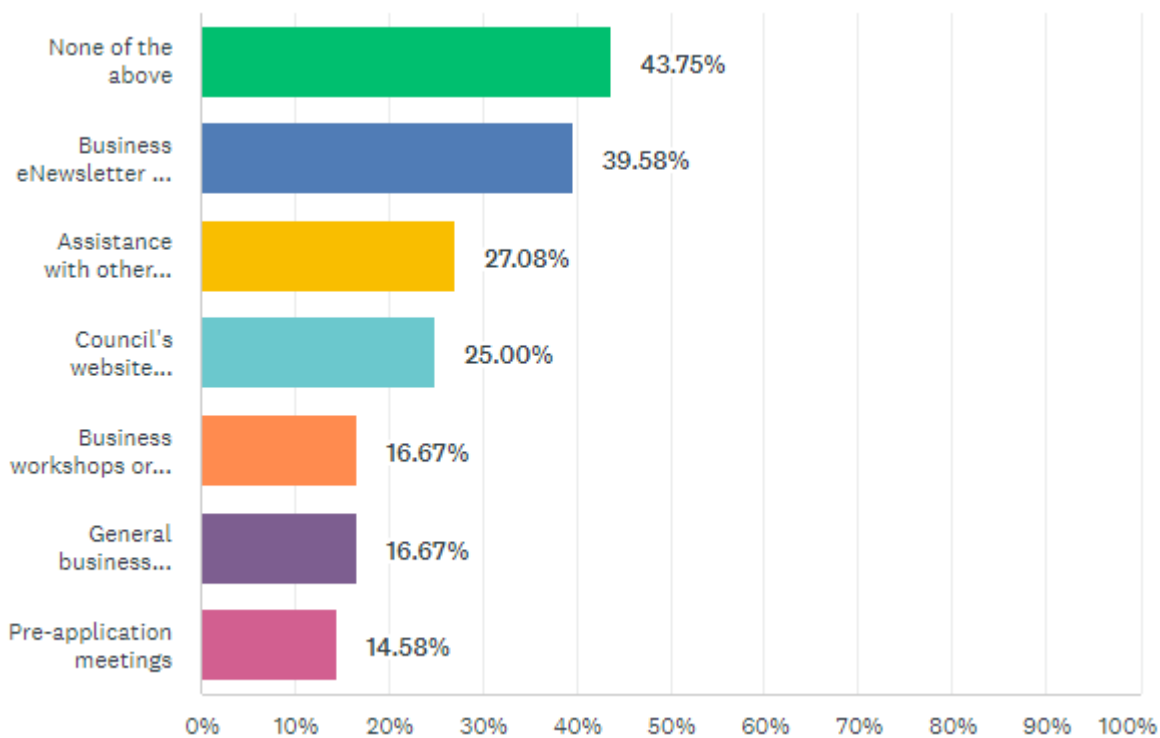


	%
No	60.00%
Yes	30.00%
Not applicable	10.00%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>50</b>

**Hepburn Shire services**

**Q40. Has your business utilised any of the below services from the Economic Development team? (select all that apply)**

The large majority of businesses had not utilised any of the services offered by the Economic Development team. However, 39.58% were subscribed to the Business eNewsletter with around 25% seeking assistance with other Council departments or utilising Council’s website for information.



	%
None of the above	43.75%
Business eNewsletter	39.58%
Assistance with other Council department (i.e. applications or permits)	27.08%
Council’s website business pages	16.67%
General business queries or assistance	16.67%
Pre-application meetings	14.58%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>48</b>



**Q41. How could these services be improved to better your needs?**

The majority of the responses related to Council as a whole not just the Economic Development department. Below is a snapshot of some of the responses received:

- eNewsletter is very good.
- The assistance with other Council departments is great.
- Council should be solution focused for customers not on compliance.
- Council needs to fulfill its obligation with service delivery and asset management.
- Tourism is well covered by state agencies and industry groups.
- Timely responses to enquiries.
- Promote this assistance for businesses better.
- Inclusion of the arts sector.
- Timely processes for businesses which have a negative impact.
- Additional planning liaison staff.
- Better understanding and support for farming.
- More prompt communication.
- Retaining staff.

**Q42. What are the high-level business issues or opportunities the Hepburn Shire Council should be advocating for to support local businesses?**

There were a wide range of responses to this question. Below is a list of some of the relevant responses:

- Climate change impacts.
- More solar, batteries and EV chargers.
- More events and opportunities that include local businesses.
- Council should always seek to engage local services before using those outside the shire.
- Housing availability and affordability making it difficult to attract and retain staff.
- Lack of transport.
- Risk of staff who rent locally and do not drive losing rental and therefore will leave employment.
- Advocating for the community spend and shop locally and therefore provide a circular economy.
- Support for new business initiatives and projects with less delays for permits and amendments.
- Beautify Daylesford “CBD” and neighbouring shopping strips.
- Support for grant opportunities for to prevent flooding for Creswick and Clunes.
- Lobbying governments to extend small grants and increase upgrading energy saving initiatives.
- A unified visitor profile strategy.
- Funding for the creative sector.
- Reduced rates for home-based businesses.

**Q43. Please complete your business details if you are open to be contact in relation to your answers (optional).**

22 businesses identified that they were open to be contacted to discuss the survey or any business-related opportunities or ideas.

**Q44. If there is any additional information you would like to provide, please enter below.**

There were only a few responses which generally requested more street planting and beautification in the towns, villages and along country roads.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Survey Findings	Actions	Timelines
Businesses located in Daylesford, Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon and Trentham were asked whether they would be interested in being a member of a Business and Tourism Association (BATA's) 63.83% said yes however only 8.51% were interested in being part of organising association i.e. President, Secretary or Treasurer.	Council will provide support and assistance for new BATA's in the shire. The establishment of new BATA's needs to be supported and driven by businesses prepared to run the association, including provision of active members such as President, Secretary and Treasurers.	Ongoing. Council will provide support, advice and assistance to BATA's as requested.
Home-based businesses identified networking opportunities and professional development as a service that would be beneficial to their businesses.	Encourage home-based businesses to subscribe to the <a href="#">Business eNewsletter</a> to be kept up to date with opportunities.	Ongoing.
Lack of affordable housing including rentals has created a challenge for local businesses to attract and retain staff.	The Affordable Housing Action Plan and Strategy are a key priority for Council. Council's endorsed 2024/2025 Annual Budget includes \$100,000 in funding to resource the further implementation of the action plan and strategy.	2024/2025.
Reliable and/or lack of internet and mobile reception.	Advocate to telecommunications companies for better service.	Ongoing.
Challenges with land zoning.	Council has adopted the <a href="#">Town Structure Plans</a> and <a href="#">Rural Hepburn Strategy</a> . Changes will take some time and involve future planning scheme amendments, along with more formal community and stakeholder consultation.	Ongoing.
Directional signage for Albert, Howe and Vincent Streets in Daylesford.	Council has recently updated the old signage with generic business identification and directional arrows.	Completed.
Empty shop fronts.	Investigating short term opportunities or window dressings or art in empty spaces.	Ongoing.
Council planning, building and enforcement challenges.	Economic Development work as a conduit between businesses and other Council departments.	Ongoing. Businesses encouraged to contact <a href="mailto:business@hepburn.vic.gov.au">business@hepburn.vic.gov.au</a>
Opportunity to access Hepburn Energy.	Investigate the possibility of businesses being able to access this product.	2024/2025.

Survey Findings	Actions	Timelines
A large majority of businesses identified that a Local Business Directory would be beneficial to their business.	Council has implemented a free online local business directory.	Completed.
Business collaboration and connections.	Create opportunities that facilitate meeting other businesses and making new connections.	Ongoing.
Encouraging community to buy locally and for businesses to utilise local business suppliers and products.	Implement the new Local Business Directory to provide a platform for locals and businesses to source local suppliers, trades and products.	Completed.
Funding opportunities for accessible buildings.	Investigate State or Federal Government grants to assist businesses to make their premises accessible.	Promote grants when available.
Promotion of new tourism attractions.	Council has implemented a new Visitor website that will provide promotional opportunities.	Completed.
Businesses identified marketing, social media, online sales and business marketing as their priority subjects for workshops and webinars across multiple times and days.	Implement a program of workshops and webinars that support the identified learning priorities. Visit Council's <a href="#">Business Events page</a> for current learning opportunities.	2024/2025. Ongoing addition of workshop and webinar opportunities on Council's Business Events website page.
Casual business networking nights.	Facilitate casual business networking nights and opportunities across the shire.	2024/2025. Add to Council's Business Events website page.
Some businesses identified they would be interested in industry specific training.	Investigate the survey responses to understand the specific training required and find relevant training providers.	2024/2025.
Businesses identified Facebook, their website and Instagram as their main promotional platforms.	Provide an opportunity for businesses to learn how to increase their knowledge and understand new opportunities to promote their businesses.	2024/2025.
Only 30% of business have a continuity/emergency management plan.	Find or engage with an advisor or consultant that can provide information, assistance or advice on writing a plan.	2024/2025.
Climate change impacts were of a high concern.	The <a href="#">Circular Economy Business Toolkit</a> will assist businesses to identifying and implement opportunities along with the <a href="#">Sustainable Hepburn Strategy</a> and <a href="#">Community Z-Net</a> .	Ongoing.
More EV charging stations	Council has installed EV charging stations in most towns with Clunes still to be installed. This was an action from the <a href="#">Sustainable Hepburn Strategy</a> .	Finalised 2024/2025.

Survey Findings	Actions	Timelines
Lack of transport was an issue for local businesses.	Council is currently working on an <a href="#">Integrated Transport Strategy</a> and businesses and residents will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Strategy.	Council to consider adoption of the Integrated Transport Strategy and supporting implementation plan in 2025.
A unified Visitor Strategy.	Council is working on a Visitor Servicing Strategy with Daylesford Macedon Tourism and Tourism Midwest Victoria.	2024/2025.
Funding and support for the creative sector.	Council has a dedicated Creative Communities Officer and an adopted <a href="#">Arts and Culture Strategy</a> .	Officer works 3 days a week and the Strategy will inform sector opportunities.
Grant and funding opportunities.	Businesses can keep up to date on the latest grants or funding streams available by <a href="#">subscribing to the Business eNewsletter</a> .	Ongoing. Promoted through monthly Business eNewsletter.
Opportunity for more events to include local businesses.	Council's dedicated Events Officer will encourage event operators to include and engage with local business owners as per the <a href="#">Hepburn Shire Events Strategy</a> .	Ongoing.
Beautification of township commercial and retail centres.	<a href="#">Town Structure Plans</a> and Urban Design Frameworks will identify opportunities across the townships.	Town Structure Plans have been adopted by Council. Changes will take some time and involve future planning scheme amendments, along with more formal community and stakeholder consultation.
Advocate for high-level business issues and opportunities to relevant authorities and bodies.	There were many items identified. Council will review and where possible advocate for these.	Ongoing.