

# Rotorua Business Pulse

April 2026

Economic optimism has sharply retreated amid global energy shocks and geopolitical volatility, leading to severe margin squeezes and stalled investments. While external pressures like fuel costs and inflation dominate concerns, businesses find resilience in internal strategy, cultural strength, and a rapid surge in AI adoption. Operators urgently seek regulatory reforms, infrastructure upgrades, and tourism recovery to navigate this uncertainty.

Select Survey Period: April 2026

(1) ▾



**ROTORUANZ**

## Background

The Rotorua Business Pulse programme is a joint initiative between RotoruaNZ and Rotorua Business Chamber. The programme provides Rotorua business leaders (owners, CEOs, GMs) an opportunity to share their thoughts on the local economy and how their business is faring across key metrics. The survey is run on a half-yearly basis with the first survey conducted in April 2022.

This dashboard provides an overview of the topline metrics for all survey periods. [View](#) the current and previous Rotorua Business Pulse reports in pdf format.

[Register](#) your interest in participating in future Rotorua Business Pulse Surveys.



### Unlock the Benefits of Chamber Membership

Join the Rotorua Business Chamber and become part of a powerful network dedicated to business success. As the district's leading business organisation, we provide the connections, advocacy, and resources to help your business thrive.

Join as a new member today. [Signup Now](#)

[Gemini AI](#) assisted drafting these key themes

## Key themes

85 Rotorua business people participated in the April 2026 survey. Key themes for the April 2026 report are a result of the responses collected during the survey period from the 15th April to 20th May 2026:

- .. Economic sentiment has experienced a sharp, synchronized retreat, erasing the robust optimism that defined late 2025. This sudden contraction is heavily tied to global energy shocks, where the war with Iran has triggered steep fuel cost spikes. While local businesses express a resilient, net-positive outlook for their own organisation, the overarching anxiety regarding overheads has successfully deflated wider confidence, stalling forward-looking expectations for both the national and Rotorua economies into minor negative territory.
- .. Internal business metrics reveal a severe margin squeeze, crushing earlier operational optimism. An unrelenting drop in business affordability has forced operators to maintain near-record price hikes simply to offset soaring overheads. With cost pressures completely eclipsing revenue, forward-looking expectations for profitability have swung sharply into negative territory. In response to this earnings crunch, local businesses are freezing expansion plans, virtually halting new capital investments and severely pulling back on intended staffing increases.
- .. Business leaders are most positive about their internal foundations, with business strategy and organisational culture leading as key drivers of confidence. This focus on internal strength provides a stable platform for growth. For the wider region, optimism is centered on the recovery of tourism and event attraction. This synergy between strategic focus and a revitalized tourism sector is fostering economic growth.
- .. Energy price increases, inflation, and geopolitical volatility are the foremost concerns for Rotorua businesses, highlighting a period of heightened external pressure. This anxiety over rising costs is driving a strong desire for economic development and tourism recovery. Businesses are looking for stability and growth, yet remain cautious as they navigate global uncertainty and local infrastructure needs to find a way forward.
- .. Workplace pressures reflect an anxious shift in focus, driven entirely by external global forces rather than traditional internal operational hurdles. While historical headaches like finding skilled staff have completely fallen off the radar, the escalating conflict with Iran has triggered sharp anxieties regarding the forward sales pipeline. This wave of international uncertainty has left local operators increasingly losing sleep over broader macroeconomic forces completely outside of their control.
- .. The global fuel crisis has created a challenging dual pressure for the Rotorua business community, directly impacting operating costs while simultaneously compressing consumer spending. With roughly half of the respondent businesses relying on the tourism sector, many respondents report a noticeable slowdown in customer foot traffic and discretionary visitor spending. To adapt, Rotorua businesses are often choosing to absorb rising supply chain costs rather than passing them on to consumers.
- .. Ahead of the 2026 general election, Rotorua's business community is presenting a clear policy mandate that balances long-term regional foundations with immediate operational survival. Local operators are heavily prioritizing structural longevity, calling for robust infrastructure upgrades alongside targeted tourism and regional development. Crucially, the severe margin squeeze heavily shapes their expectations, driving an urgent demand for regulatory reforms to lower the cost of doing business, paired with a strong focus on securing fuel and energy stability.
- .. A strong momentum toward supply chain evolution is emerging as Rotorua operations look to bolster resilience and de-risk. While possibly not a priority for service-based businesses with minimal inputs (as indicated by 19 respondents selecting 'Not applicable'), the active uptake of sustainability and local-sourcing changes among the remaining respondent businesses is driving a structural shift - resulting in shorter, more transparent, and environmentally conscious local supply networks.
- .. Operational strategies among Rotorua businesses show a powerful shift toward digital integration, with regular AI adoption surging 14 percentage points to a dominant 82%. Meanwhile, core social and environmental benchmarks remain highly stable with a majority of organizations continuing to pay a living wage or higher, and almost half are maintaining active carbon reduction policies, even in the face of further cost increases resulting from the ongoing geopolitical volatility in the Middle East.
- .. AI adoption has reached critical mass among Rotorua businesses, with a striking 82% actively utilizing these tools either across multiple functions or in limited capacities. This widespread integration is primarily fueling back-office efficiencies, yielding substantial time savings and heightened productivity through practical tasks like document summarisation, data analysis, and chatbot interaction. However, scaling this momentum further is bottlenecked by organizational friction rather than cost, specifically data privacy apprehensions and an internal deficit in capability and technical skills.
- .. An improving local air travel experience at Rotorua Airport is highlighted by notable drops across all challenge categories, though scheduling and reliability remain the top ongoing hurdles. Additionally, respondents continue to heavily identify Queenstown as the primary direct destination that would be advantageous for business, with comments further reflecting its strong appeal for leisure travel.
- .. Overall sentiment for Rotorua reveals a mix of cautious optimism and economic reality with descriptor words like 'potential' and 'improving' reflecting a sense of growth, while other words describe ongoing struggles. Respondents final comments underscore concerns around the global geopolitical climate, such as the Iran war's impact on costs and tourism. Additionally, there is a strong call for central government support to balance Rotorua's national social contributions with local economic and infrastructure needs.



ROTORUA BUSINESS CHAMBER PRESENTS 2026  
**Business Awards**  
Ngā Tohu  
Pakihi Rotorua

Entries are open for the [Tompkins Wake Rotorua Business Awards 2026](#), celebrating 35 years of recognising the businesses, organisations, and individuals shaping our local economy. Whether you're entering your own business or nominating one you admire, 2026 marks a significant milestone and presents a standout opportunity to be part of the Awards.

[Nominate or Enter today!](#)

Entries close Sunday 5 July 2026



Economic sentiment has experienced a sharp, synchronized retreat, erasing the robust optimism that defined late 2025. This sudden contraction is heavily tied to global energy shocks, where the war with Iran has triggered steep fuel cost spikes. While local businesses express a resilient, net-positive outlook for their own organisation, the overarching anxiety regarding overheads has successfully deflated wider confidence, stalling forward-looking expectations for both the national and Rotorua economies into minor negative territory.

[Gemini AI](#) assisted drafting this narration

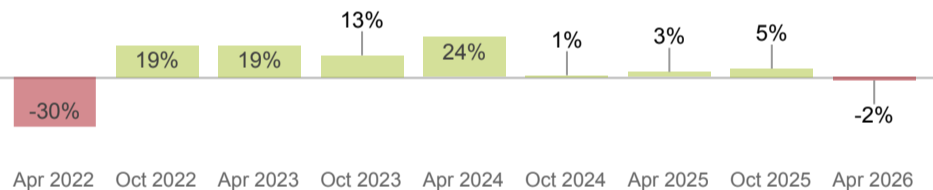
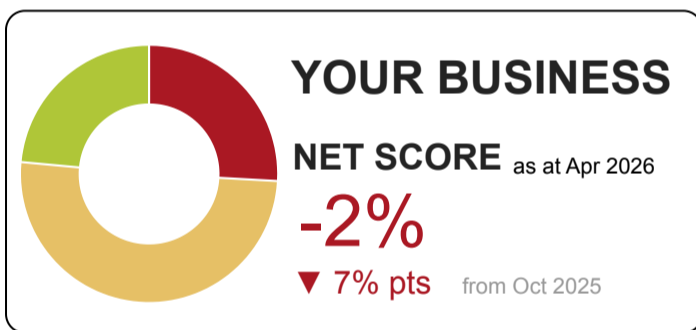
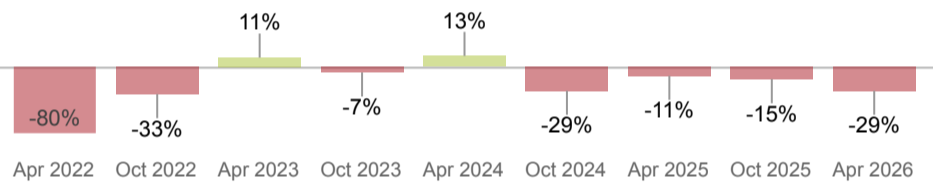
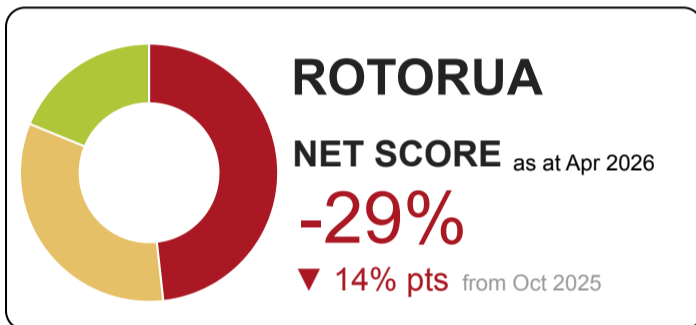
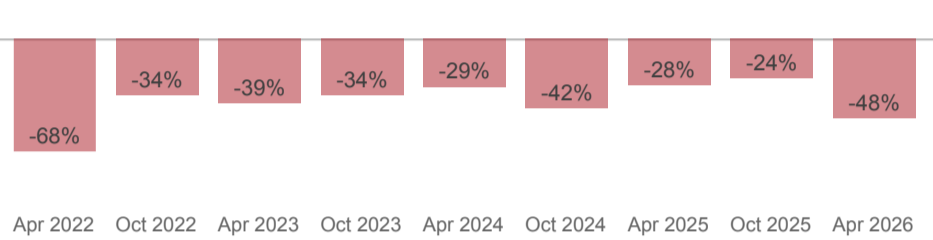
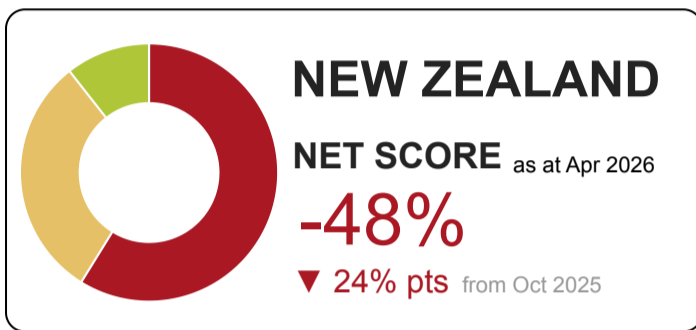
Select Survey Period: April 2026 (1) ▾

Select Industry: All Industries (1) ▾

## Compared to 12 months ago, how do you think the economic situation has changed for...?

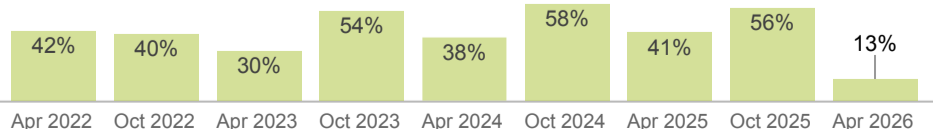
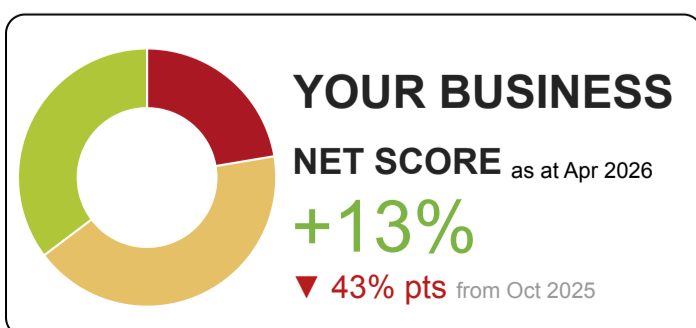
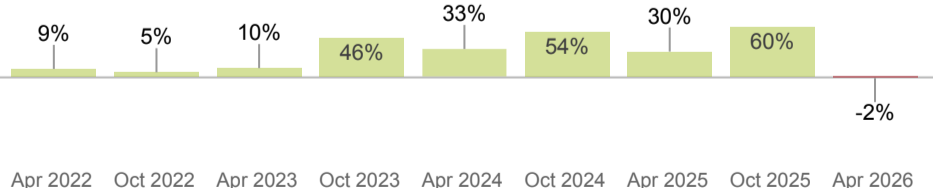
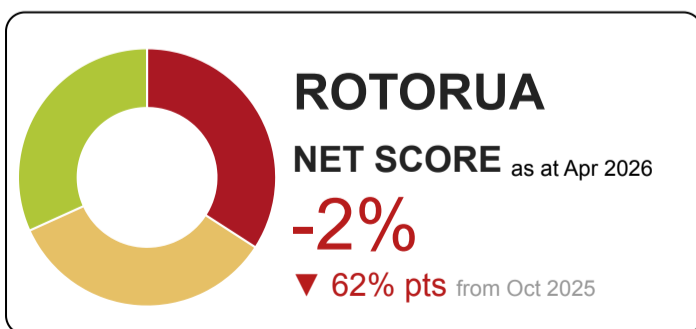
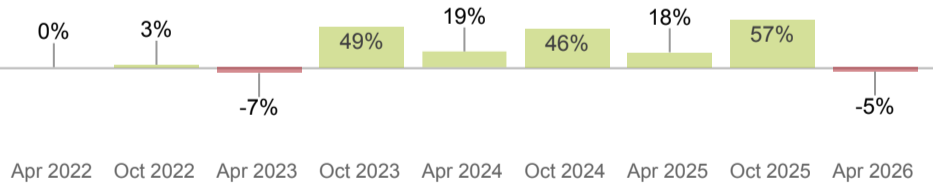
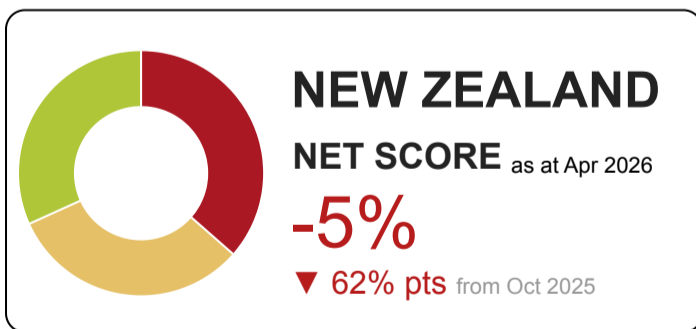
● Improved ● Remained the same ● Deteriorated

**Explainer:**  
Results are presented as a Net Score, subtracting the 'deteriorated' percentage from the 'improved' percentage. Change values are versus the previous survey period.



## In 12 months' time, how do you think the economic situation will have changed for...?

● Improved ● Remained the same ● Deteriorated



(85 respondents answered questions on this page in the April 2026 survey)



Internal business metrics reveal a severe margin squeeze, crushing earlier operational optimism. An unrelenting drop in business affordability has forced operators to maintain near-record price hikes simply to offset soaring overheads. With cost pressures completely eclipsing revenue, forward-looking expectations for profitability have swung sharply into negative territory. In response to this earnings crunch, local businesses are freezing expansion plans, virtually halting new capital investments and severely pulling back on intended staffing increases.

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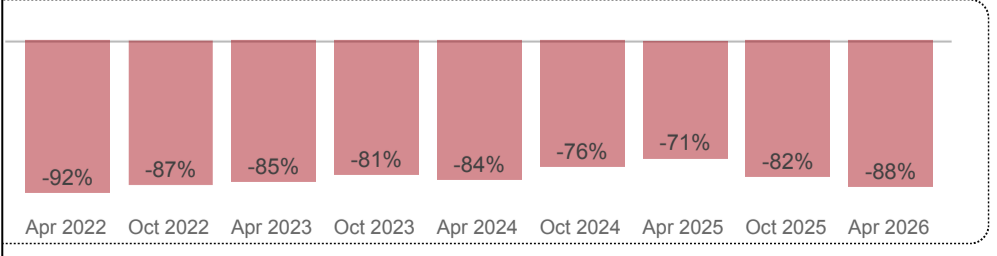
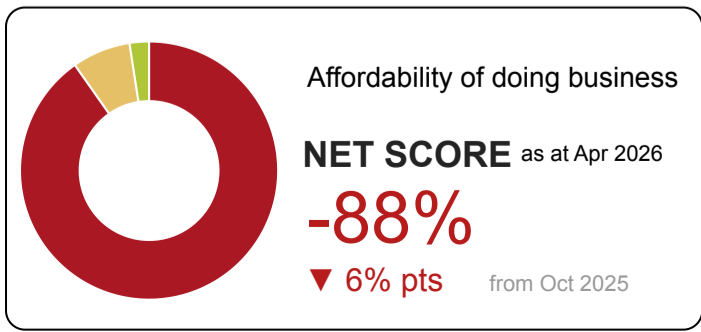
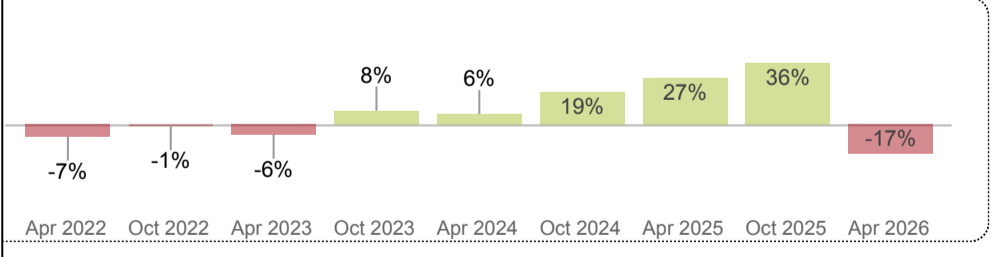
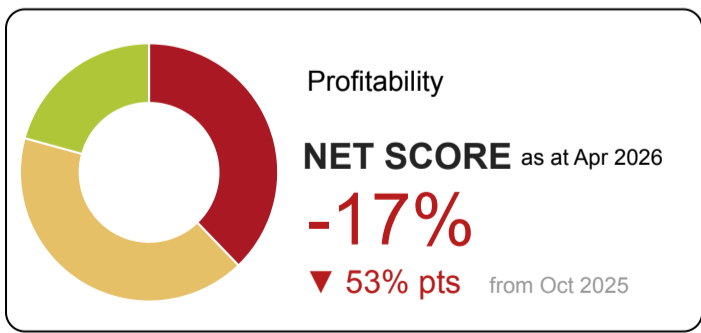
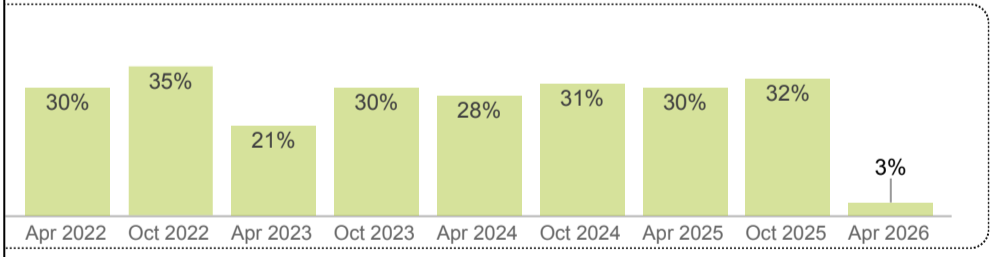
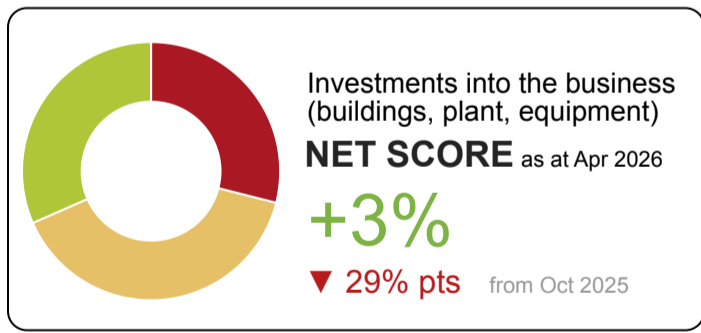
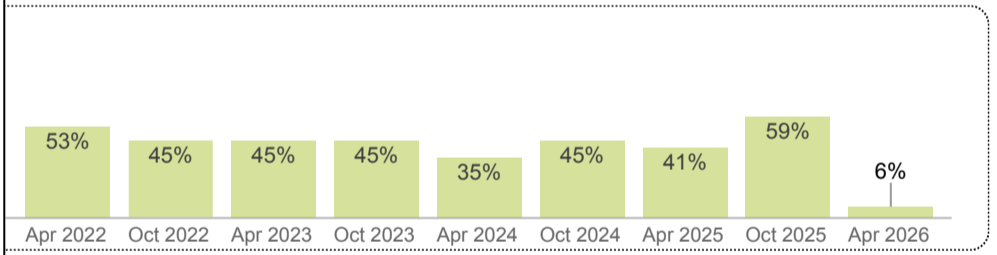
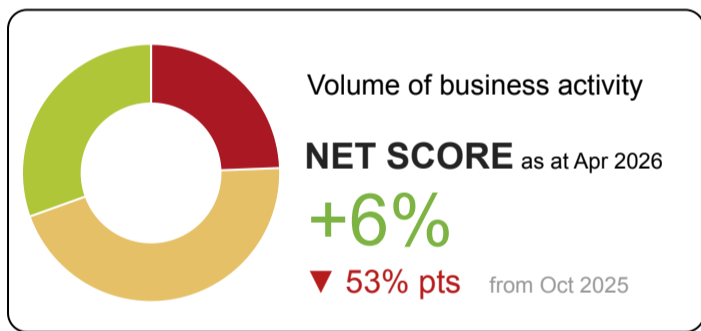
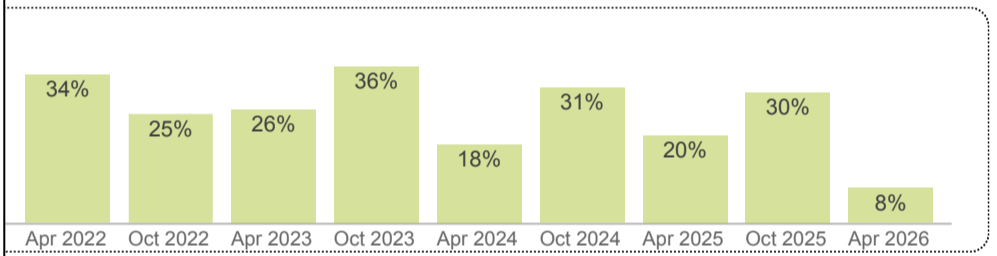
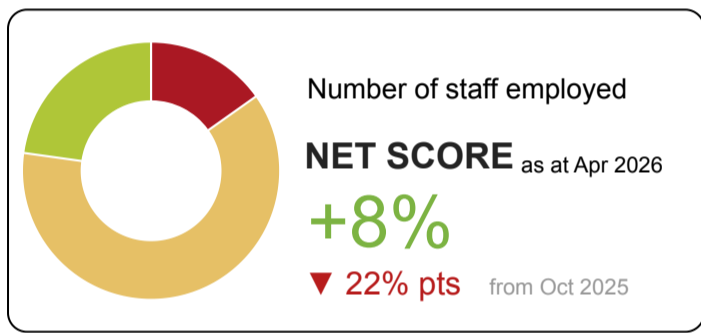
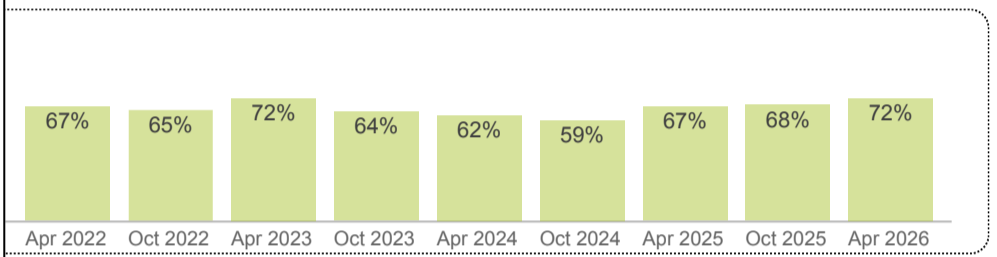
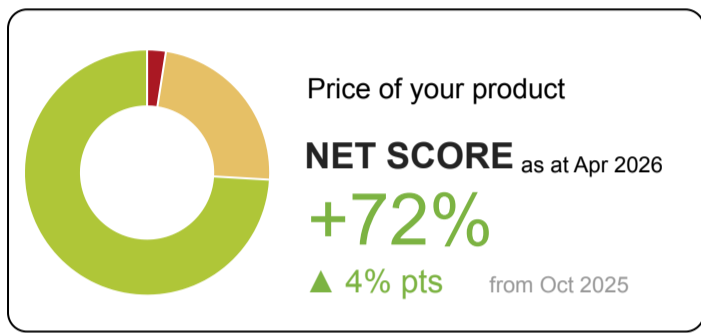
Select Survey Period: April 2026 (1) ▾

Select Industry: All Industries (1) ▾

## Across the following measures, how do you expect your business to have changed in 12 months' time?

● Increased ● Remained the same ● Decreased

**Explainer:**  
Results are presented as a Net Score, subtracting the 'decreased' percentage from the 'increased' percentage. Change values are versus the previous survey period.







Energy price increases, inflation, and geopolitical volatility are the foremost concerns for Rotorua businesses, highlighting a period of heightened external pressure. This anxiety over rising costs is driving a strong desire for economic development and tourism recovery. Businesses are looking for stability and growth, yet remain cautious as they navigate global uncertainty and local infrastructure needs to find a way forward.

[Gemini AI](#) assisted drafting this narration

Select Survey Period: April 2026 (1) ▾

Select Industry: All Industries (1) ▾

**Explainer:**

Results are the percentage of respondents that are 'Very' or 'Extremely' concerned with each statement. Change values are versus the previous survey period.

## Please rate your current level of concern about the following in relation to your business

	Very + Extremely Concerned									Apr 2026 change from prior period
	Apr 2022	Oct 2022	Apr 2023	Oct 2023	Apr 2024	Oct 2024	Apr 2025	Oct 2025	Apr 2026	
Energy price increases						30%	34%	38%	52%	▲ 14% pts
Inflation - cost of goods / services	71%	70%	57%	52%	41%	33%	36%	42%	46%	▲ 4% pts
Geopolitical volatility						36%	45%	29%	46%	▲ 17% pts
Security of energy supply						14%	17%	11%	35%	▲ 24% pts
Finding skilled staff	71%	65%	64%	55%	39%	44%	43%	39%	28%	▼ 11% pts
Climate change				45%	29%	34%	21%	16%	25%	▲ 9% pts
Regulatory and policy challenges - central Government		48%	52%	36%	36%	32%	26%	13%	25%	▲ 12% pts
Regulatory and policy challenges - local Government		40%	32%	31%	33%	30%	26%	19%	24%	▲ 5% pts
Ability to generate profitability	41%	32%	39%	31%	31%	24%	33%	24%	23%	▼ 1% pts
Forward work/sales in the pipeline	23%	20%	18%	24%	27%	14%	19%	21%	22%	▲ 1% pt
Export conditions	30%	31%	18%	12%	20%	16%	27%	11%	20%	▲ 9% pts
Supply chain / shortages	36%	33%	30%	17%	12%	13%	12%	7%	20%	▲ 13% pts
Retaining skilled staff	52%	55%	52%	42%	27%	28%	29%	19%	16%	▼ 3% pts
Ability to invest capital in the business	24%	26%	25%	26%	21%	20%	22%	17%	14%	▼ 3% pts
Debt levels (cost of borrowing)	19%	20%	26%	25%	26%	11%	13%	13%	13%	0% pts
Immigration settings			35%	25%	21%	29%	16%	13%	11%	▼ 2% pts
Business survival (staying afloat)	15%	8%	14%	14%	14%	18%	14%	19%	10%	▼ 9% pts
Finding unskilled staff	34%	30%	29%	21%	8%	10%	6%	4%	5%	▲ 1% pt
Retaining unskilled staff	32%	28%	29%	16%	7%	9%	10%	5%	3%	▼ 2% pts

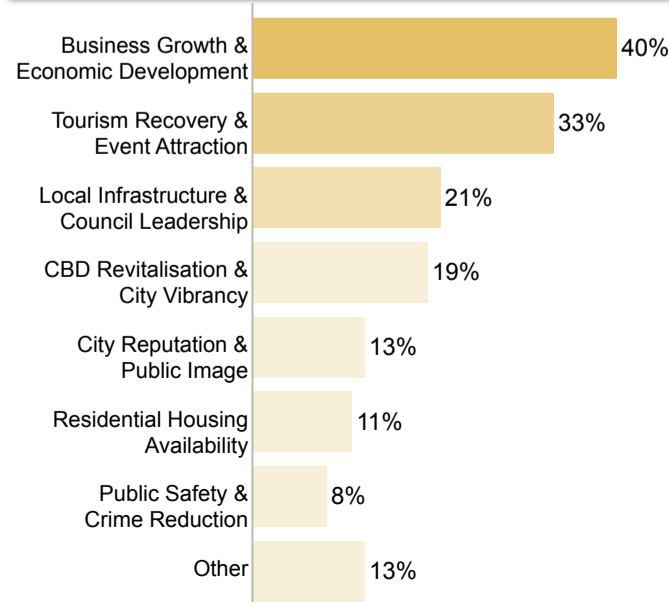
(79 respondents answered this question in the April 2026 survey)

## What do you think should be the highest priority for Rotorua over the next 12 months?

Scroll down within the table to see more comments 72 Comments

- Affordable housing
- Infrastructure and Facilities investments to support development growth and bringing more people to the city
- Driving a positive message about Rotorua to the world.
- Relocating the homeless from the CBD
- creating an environment for outside investment and new business opportunities in the city
- Strategic alignment of all sectors to have a Rotorua first focus
- Keeping the streets safe
- Growing international visitors
- keep businesses alive long enough to get through this fuel strangle
- Remaining positive about the great work we have done in the past 2 years

Click on a theme in this chart to filter the adjacent comments to the selected theme



Scroll down within table for more comments. Random sort order of comments refreshed approximately every 15 minutes. [Gemini AI](#) assisted analysis.

# MIDDLE EAST WAR & GLOBAL OIL SHOCK

The current Middle East conflict is not just a regional crisis - it is a global energy stress test

[Gemini AI](#) assisted drafting narrations and images on this page

## GLOBAL IMPACT



Middle East conflict has triggered major disruptions in global fuel markets



Brent crude oil price surpassed \$100 per barrel amid fears over supply disruptions



Countries worldwide have activated emergency energy saving measures



The Strait of Hormuz - a critical global oil transit route - remains a major concern for global energy security

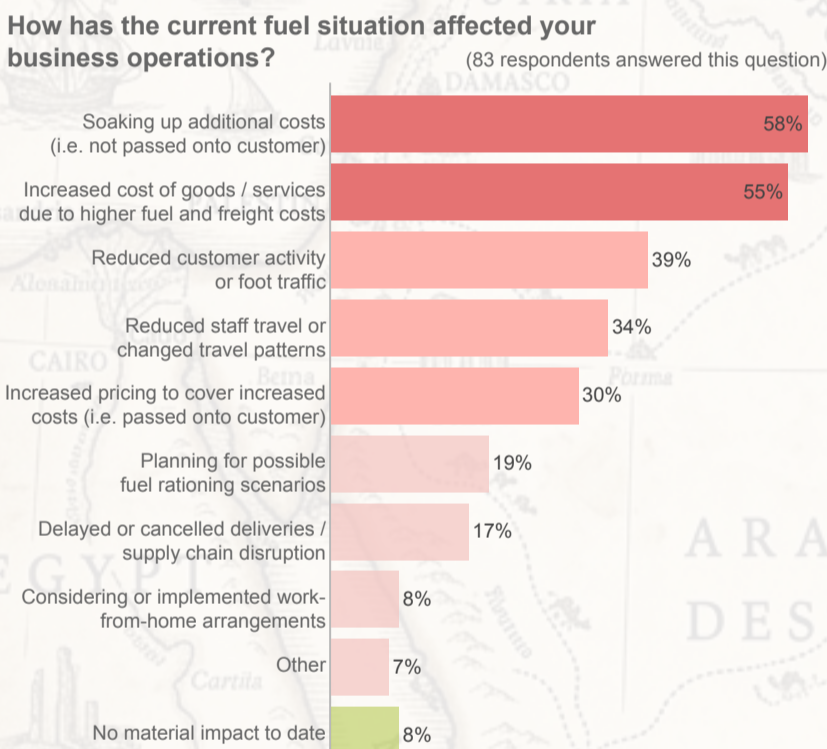
## Global oil volatility is cascading downstream - impacting customer foot traffic and operational margins for Rotorua businesses

- **Macro-to-Local:** What began as a regional security crisis quickly became a global energy stress test. For New Zealand, this resulted in soaring costs at the fuel pump and spiked freight expenses across supply chains.
- **Unique Vulnerability:** With roughly half of respondents directly in the tourism sector or having tourism-related activity, Rotorua is highly exposed to consumer discretionary spending choices - high fuel pump prices act as an immediate deterrent for domestic visitors and elevate international airfares.
- **Widespread Impact:** The downstream effects are widespread across the district, creating a ripple effect for local operators. Businesses are simultaneously navigating a drop-off in customers while absorbing cost increases internally - forcing many to slash discretionary business travel and consolidate supply chain expenses to stay afloat.

## COMMUNITY UNDER PRESSURE

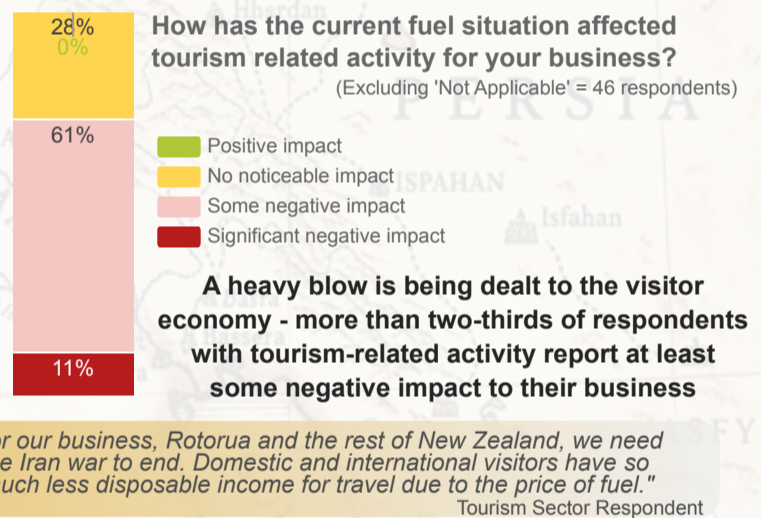


## THE RIPPLE EFFECT

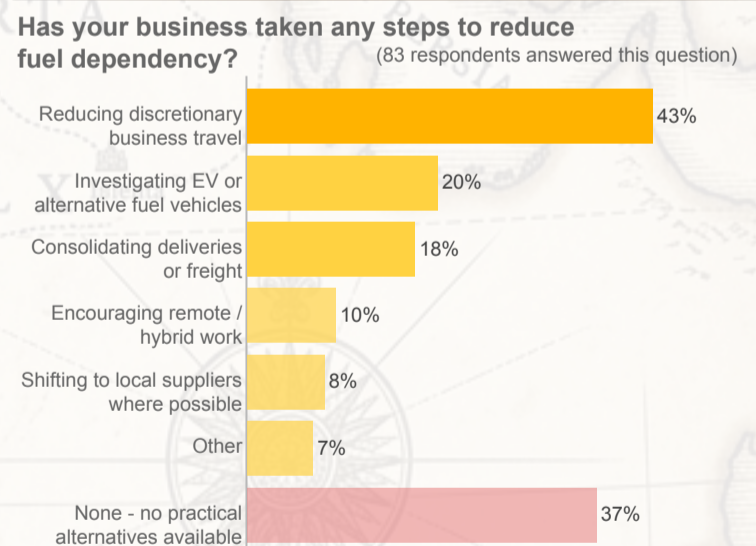


**The pressure of increased fuel costs and geopolitical instability is having a ripple effect resulting in a visible slowdown with fewer customers, increased supply chain costs and reduced staff travel patterns**

## IMPACT ON TOURISM



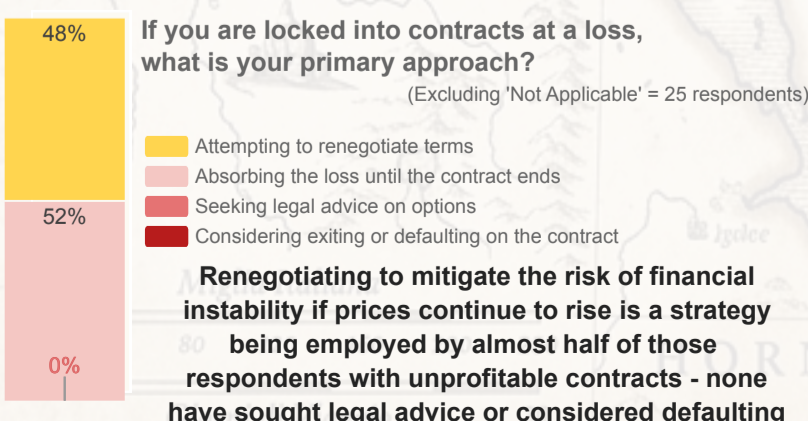
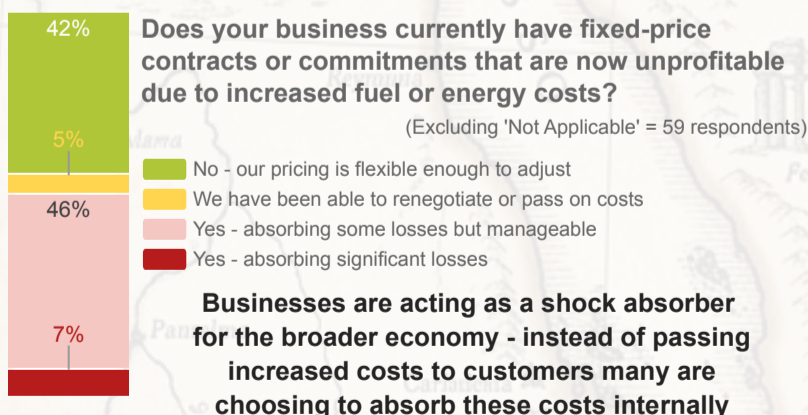
## STRATEGY FOR RESILIENCE



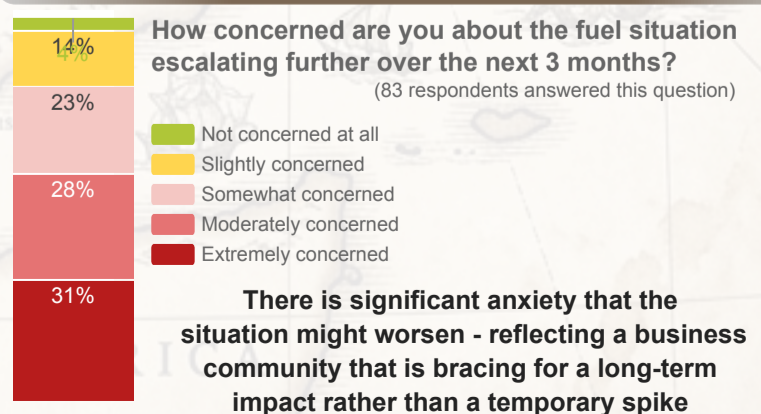
**Many businesses are slashing discretionary business travel, considering EV or alternative fuel vehicles and building resilience into their supply chains, while a third of respondents see no practical alternatives**

*"Being resilient through the challenges of the Iran war is important so that we can continue to grow once it is over."*  
Manufacturing Sector Respondent

## TIME TO RECONSIDER



## AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE





Workplace pressures reflect an anxious shift in focus, driven entirely by external global forces rather than traditional internal operational hurdles. While historical headaches like finding skilled staff have completely fallen off the radar, the escalating conflict with Iran has triggered sharp anxieties regarding the forward sales pipeline. This wave of international uncertainty has left local operators increasingly losing sleep over broader macroeconomic forces completely outside of their control.

[Gemini AI](#) assisted drafting narrations on this page

Select Survey Period: April 2026 (1) ▾

Select Industry: All Industries (1) ▾

**Explainer:**

Results are the percentage of respondents agreeing with each statement. Change values are versus the previous survey period.

## What is the number ONE thing that keeps you awake at night with regards to your business?

	Apr 2022	Oct 2022	Apr 2023	Oct 2023	Apr 2024	Oct 2024	Apr 2025	Oct 2025	Apr 2026	Apr 2026 change from prior period
Forward work/sales in the pipeline	8%	13%	7%	8%	14%	13%	13%	11%	19%	▲ 8% pts
Ability to generate profitability	16%	3%	11%	16%	18%	23%	22%	22%	15%	▼ 7% pts
Geopolitical volatility						3%	5%	4%	15%	▲ 11% pts
Business survival (staying afloat)	8%	5%	7%	7%	11%	10%	12%	15%	8%	▼ 7% pts
Regulatory and policy challenges - central Government		8%	6%	4%	10%	7%	4%	3%	8%	▲ 5% pts
Inflation - cost of goods / services sold	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	0%	2%	3%	5%	▲ 2% pts
Ability to invest capital in the business	0%	4%	0%	1%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	▲ 1% pt
Finding skilled staff	24%	21%	17%	12%	11%	11%	9%	9%	3%	▼ 6% pts
Energy price increases						0%	0%	0%	3%	▲ 3% pts
Retaining skilled staff	4%	7%	15%	7%	5%	4%	3%	3%	1%	▼ 2% pts
Climate change			5%	4%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	▲ 1% pt
Export conditions	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	▲ 1% pt
Regulatory and policy challenges - local Government		1%	1%	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%	0%	▼ 3% pts
Debt levels (cost of borrowing)	0%	0%	6%	5%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	▼ 1% pt
Finding unskilled staff	1%	4%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0% pts
Retaining unskilled staff	0%	0%	1%	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0% pts
Security of energy supply						0%	0%	0%	0%	0% pts
Other	4%	4%	7%	9%	3%	6%	0%	8%	0%	▼ 8% pts
NOTHING keeps me awake at night	8%	11%	13%	13%	11%	10%	10%	15%	15%	0% pts

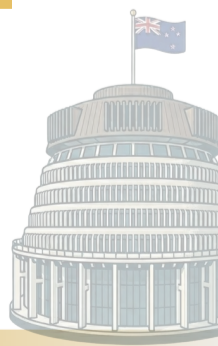
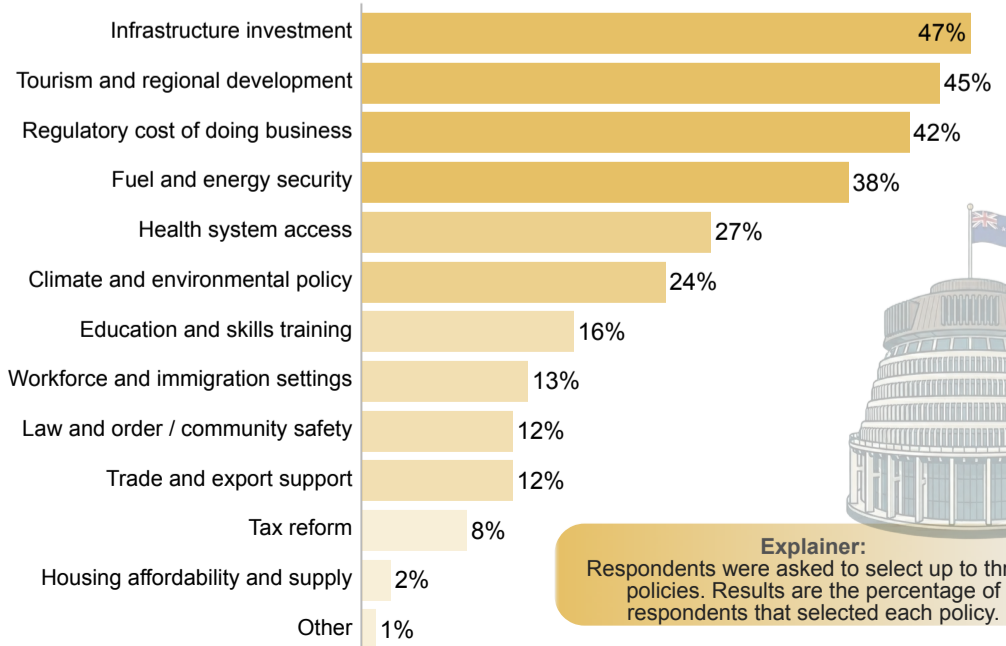
(79 respondents answered this question in the April 2026 survey)

## General Election 2026

This question was asked only in the April 2026 survey

Ahead of the 2026 general election, Rotorua's business community is presenting a clear policy mandate that balances long-term regional foundations with immediate operational survival. Local operators are heavily prioritizing structural longevity, calling for robust infrastructure upgrades alongside targeted tourism and regional development. Crucially, the severe margin squeeze heavily shapes their expectations, driving an urgent demand for regulatory reforms to lower the cost of doing business, paired with a strong focus on securing fuel and energy stability.

## With a general election on 7 November 2026, which policy areas do you most want to see prioritised by the next government?



**Explainer:**

Respondents were asked to select up to three policies. Results are the percentage of respondents that selected each policy.

(85 respondents answered this question in the April 2026 survey)

### How do you rate your current level of workplace stress / pressure?

Avg Stress Rating  
**6.14**





Operational strategies among Rotorua businesses show a powerful shift toward digital integration, with regular AI adoption surging 14 percentage points to a dominant 82%. Meanwhile, core social and environmental benchmarks remain highly stable with a majority of organizations continuing to pay a living wage or higher, and almost half are maintaining active carbon reduction policies, even in the face of further cost increases resulting from the ongoing geopolitical volatility in the Middle East.

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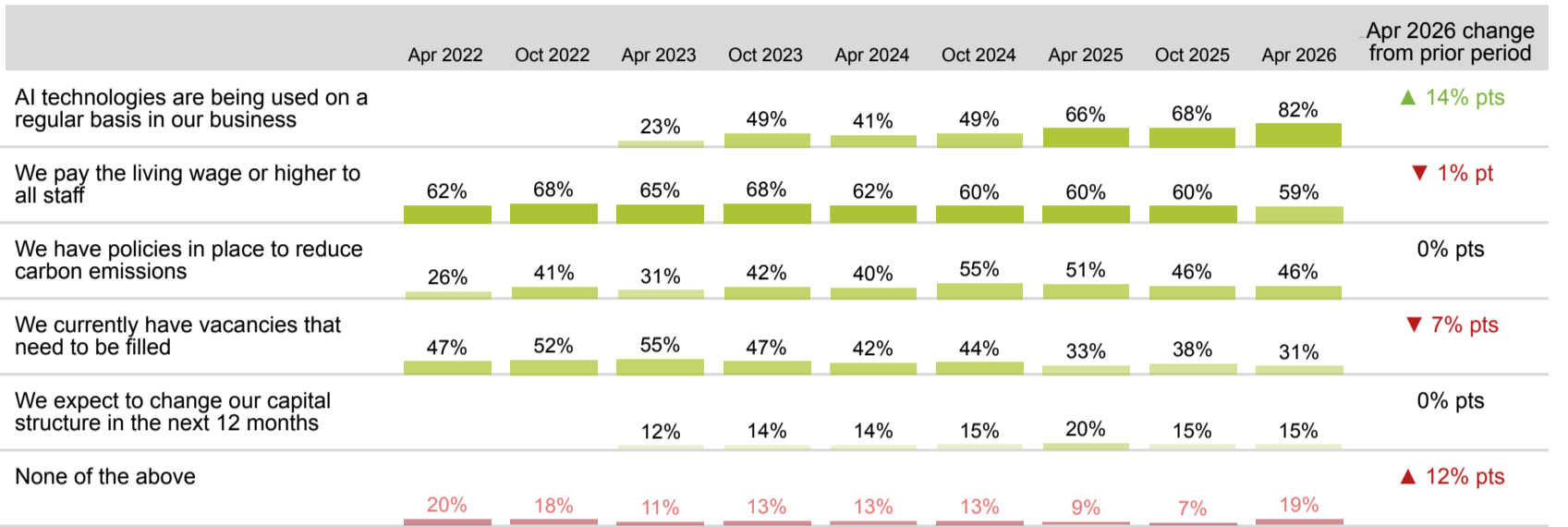
Select Survey Period: April 2026 (1) ▾

Select Industry: All Industries (1) ▾

**Explainer:**

Results on this page are the percentage of respondents agreeing with each statement. Change values are versus the previous survey period.

## Which of the following statements are true for your business?



(74 respondents answered this question in the April 2026 survey)

## Supply Chain Sustainability and Resilience

A strong momentum toward supply chain evolution is emerging as Rotorua operations look to bolster resilience and de-risk. While possibly not a priority for service-based businesses with minimal inputs (as indicated by 19 respondents selecting 'Not applicable'), the active uptake of sustainability and local-sourcing changes among the remaining respondent businesses is driving a structural shift - resulting in shorter, more transparent, and environmentally conscious local supply networks.

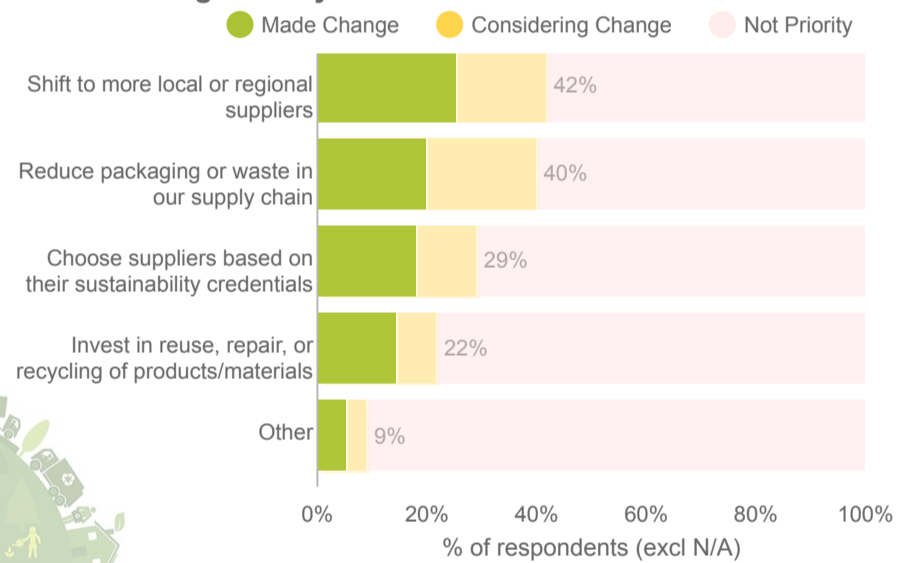
### Has your business made any changes to its supply chain in the past 12 months to improve sustainability or resilience?

(55 respondents answered this question, excluding 'Not applicable' responses which were presumably service businesses with little to no supply chain)



Supply chain questions were asked only in the April 2026 survey

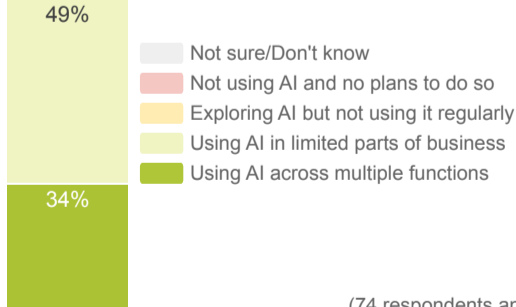
### What changes has your business made or considered?



## Business Use of AI Tools

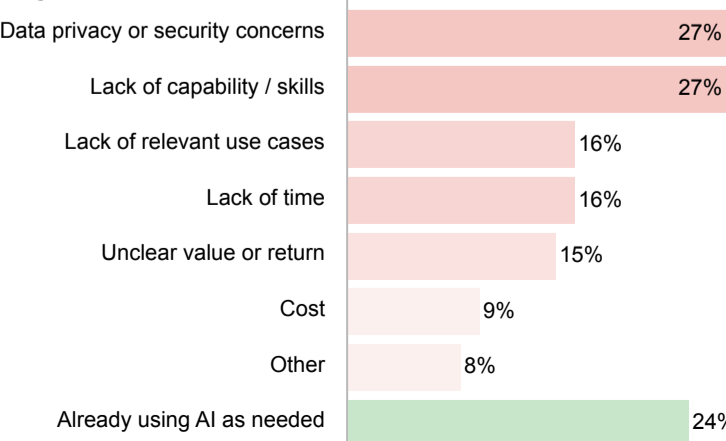
AI adoption has reached critical mass among Rotorua businesses, with a striking 82% actively utilizing these tools either across multiple functions or in limited capacities. This widespread integration is primarily fueling back-office efficiencies, yielding substantial time savings and heightened productivity through practical tasks like document summarisation, data analysis, and chatbot interaction. However, scaling this momentum further is bottlenecked by organizational friction rather than cost, specifically data privacy apprehensions and an internal deficit in capability and technical skills.

### Which best describes your business's use of AI tools?

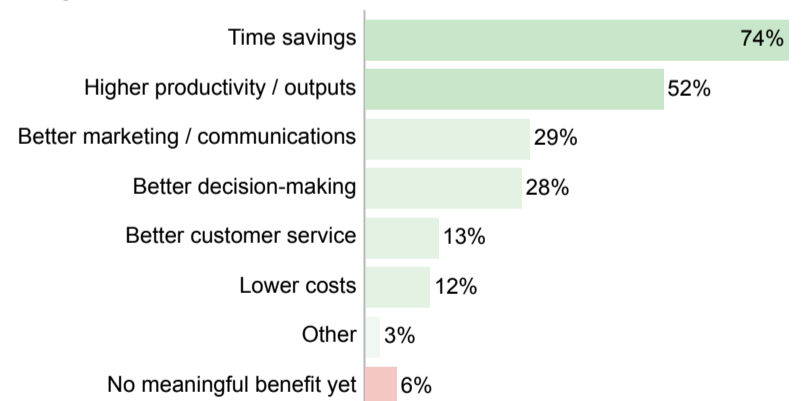


(74 respondents answered these two questions)

### What are the main BARRIERS to greater use of AI in your business? (Select up to three barriers)

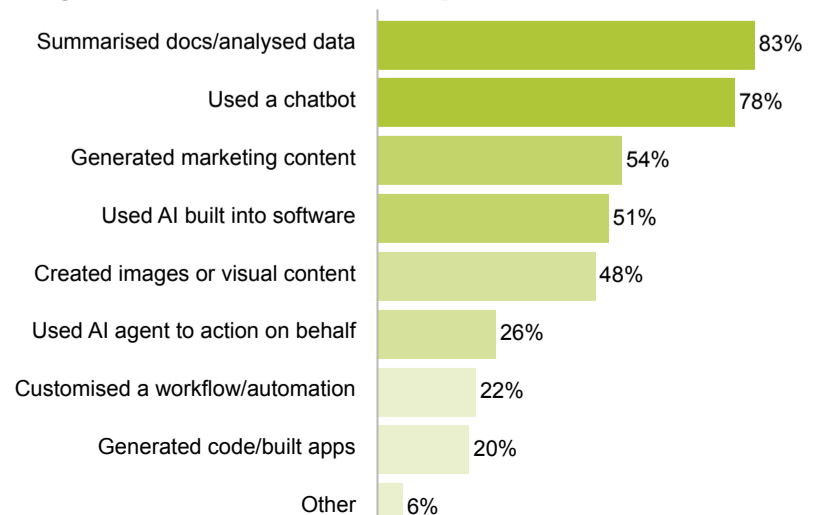


### What have been the main BENEFITS of AI for your business so far? (Select up to three benefits)



(Excl 'Not sure' and 'Not using'; 69 respondents answered these two questions)

### Which of the following AI activities has anyone in your business done in the past 6 months?





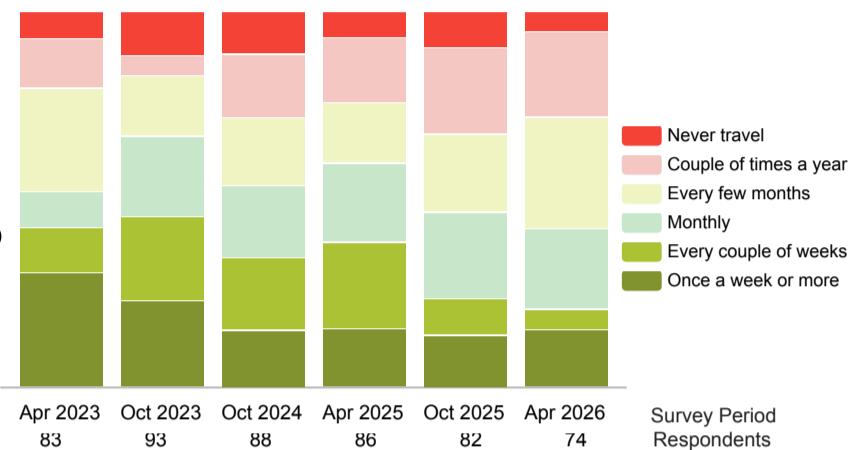
While scheduling and reliability remain the top hurdles, notable drops in challenge intensity across all areas point to an improved local air travel experience

- More than 20% of surveyed Rotorua business travellers fly at least every couple of weeks, with nearby cities and Auckland continuing to stand out as the primary domestic business destinations
- Over half of respondents who travel by air fly from Rotorua Airport at least some of the time, though a persistent segments of travellers still rarely or never utilize the local terminal
- Tauranga (TRG) and Auckland (AKL) remain the primary alternative departure points used by local business people when opting out of flying directly from Rotorua
- Although flight reliability and scheduling are still highlighted as the main operational pain points, the severity of all major airport challenges dropped substantially compared to prior periods
- Queenstown (ZQN) continues to be the dominant destination desired for new direct routes, with nearly 80% of respondents identifying it as an advantageous addition for business or leisure travel

'Airport' questions asked only in some survey periods

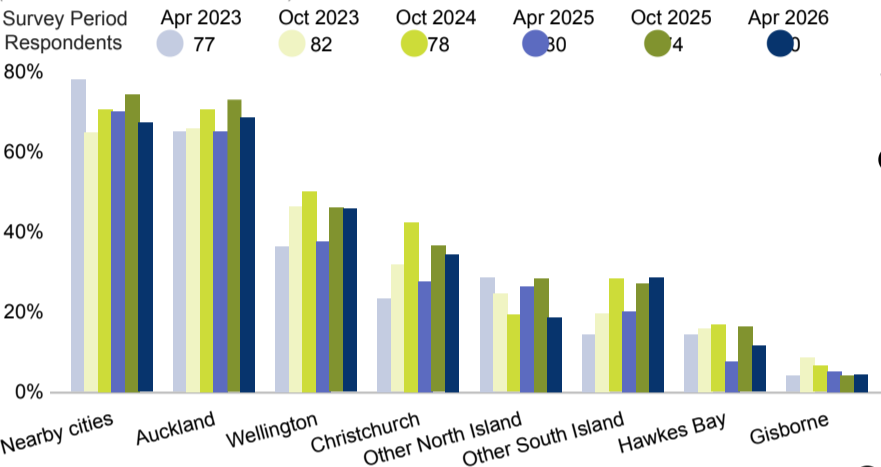
Select Industry: All Industries (1)

### How often do you, or your employees travel for work?



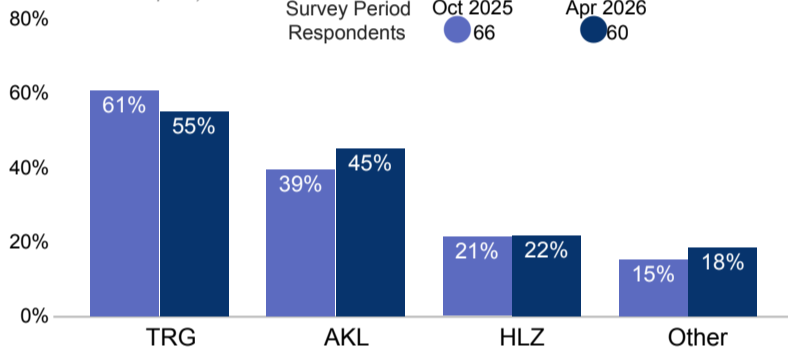
### Where does your business travel domestically for business?

(Filtered to exclude 'Never travel')



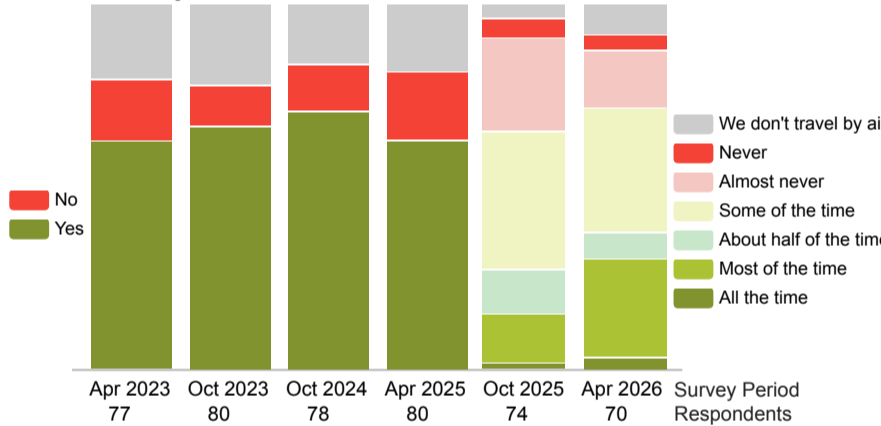
### Which alternative airports do you depart from and why?

(Filtered to exclude 'We don't travel by air. Additionally, surveys previous to the October 2025 survey also filtered to only include those respondents who didn't typically depart from Rotorua Airport.)



### Do you or your employees typically depart from Rotorua Airport?

(Filtered to exclude 'Never travel')



October 2025 survey and onwards had a scale of responses to choose from versus previous survey respondents were only offered Yes/No option.

Click on an airport code to filter comments 173 Comments

- Apr 2026 Where available based on a priority order of Tauranga, Hamilton, Whakatane, and Taupo
- Apr 2026 Auckland, Taupo or Hamilton depending on flight timings
- Apr 2026 Tauranga, or Auckland. Better times and more options
- Apr 2026 Travel by road. Or Auckland airport.
- Apr 2026 Hamilton or Tauranga. More flight options from these two airports

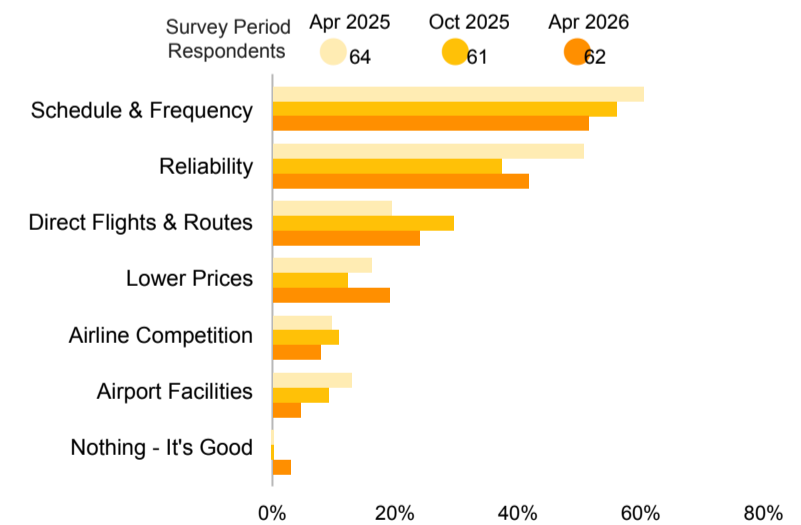
### Rate the level of challenge you and/or your colleagues have experienced at Rotorua Airport during the last 12 months:

(Asked only from the April 2025 survey onwards)

Significant + Very Significant Challenge				
Survey Period	Apr 2025	Oct 2025	Apr 2026	Apr 2026 change from prior period
Respondents	86	82	74	
Flight cancellations & reliability	58%	51%	45%	▼ 6% pts
Flight scheduling	52%	56%	41%	▼ 15% pts
Available routes & destinations	42%	41%	34%	▼ 7% pts
Ticket prices	45%	38%	32%	▼ 6% pts
Flight capacity	26%	17%	11%	▼ 6% pts
Overall airport experience	3%	4%	3%	▼ 1% pt

### What would improve air travel in and out of Rotorua for business travel?

(Asked only from the April 2025 survey onwards)



Click on a theme above to filter comments 187 Comments

- Apr 2026 More frequent flights and better-timed schedules for same-day travel would make a big difference, along with improved reliability and more competitive pricing. These changes would make Rotorua a more practical option for business travel.
- Apr 2026 Schedule, Frequency, Jet services to SI, reliability of landing/take off re weather,
- Apr 2026 Better times, fewer cancellations
- Apr 2026 More cost effective rates and more flight options, particularly to the main centres
- Apr 2026 Koru lounge to deal with the near inevitable delays/cancellation. No dedicated area to be able to work effectively while waiting for flights/delayed
- Apr 2026 more frequency to Auckland at the least but Rotorua to Queenstown to improve visitor accessibility and to make the dial

### What other domestic direct destinations would be advantageous for business travel?

(Asked only from the October 2025 survey onwards)

Click on an airport code to filter comments 116 Comments		
ZQN 61%	None 22%	Apr 2026 Kerikeri, PNorth, New Plymouth, Nelson
		Apr 2026 Hamilton and Queenstown would be advantageous additions. Hamilton strengthens connections within the upper North Island and Waikato business region, while Queenstown supports links to a key tourism and business destination in the South Island.
Other NI 19%	Other SI 16%	Apr 2026 Queenstown or Nelson
		Apr 2026 Queenstown, Palmerston



Overall sentiment for Rotorua reveals a mix of cautious optimism and economic reality with descriptor words like 'potential' and 'improving' reflecting a sense of growth, while other words describe ongoing struggles. Respondents final comments underscore concerns around the global geopolitical climate, such as the Iran war's impact on costs and tourism. Additionally, there is a strong call for central government support to balance Rotorua's national social contributions with local economic and infrastructure needs.

[Gemini AI](#) assisted drafting this narration

Select Survey Period: April 2026 (1) ▾

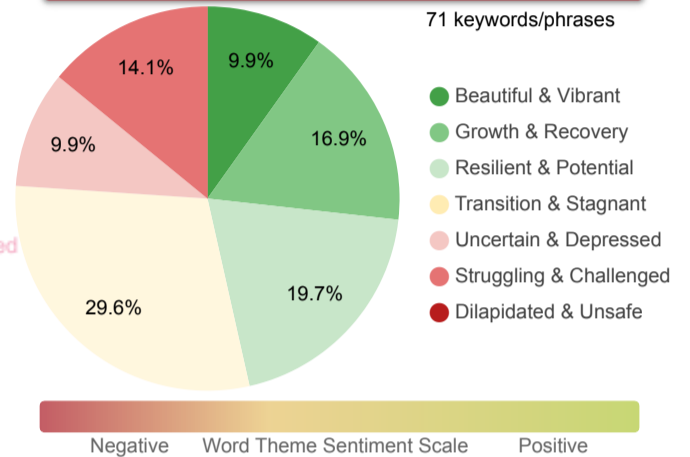
Select Industry: All Industries (1) ▾

**Explainer:**  
Results on this page are the percentage of respondents categorised by theme.

## What is the ONE word that you would use to describe Rotorua currently?

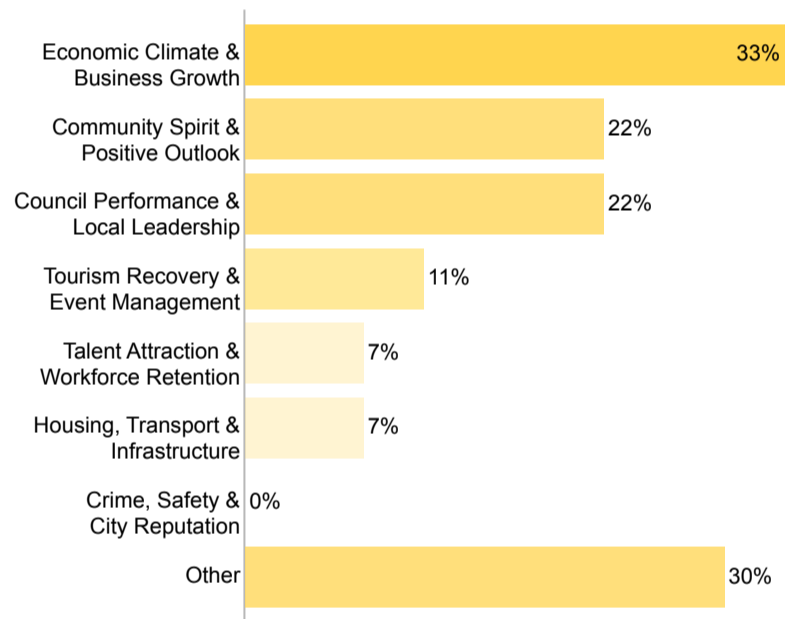


Click on a theme in the chart below to filter the adjacent Word Cloud to the selected theme



## Finally, do you have any other comments or thoughts on your business or the Rotorua economy?

Click on a theme in the adjacent chart to filter the comments below to the selected theme



Scroll down within the table to see more comments

27 Comments

It's awesome to have these as a benchmark and to support evidence based discussions with Council and/or Government, especially coming into the national election

we need to ensure the city is looking fresh and vibrant. Continue the good work around removing the hurdles for investment & growth. Job creation is key

I've always held an observational view that Rotorua has been doing relatively well since I returned to Rotorua in 2016 after spending almost 30yrs away. Rotorua has so much natural features on offer that no other region can match, ie, lakes, forestry parks and trails, thermal activity, farming and Maori culture. Rotorua will always do well, but we can do a lot better

AI is rapidly changing the way I work and keeping me ahead of the game.

Rotorua going from strength to strength which is great. Our business is poised for expansion in the next 12 months with several developments on the boil.

Tough times. Just when we thought things were going to get better....

Positive that we are on the road to change. Lets hope central and local government don't stuff things up because of inaction. Either be proactive or shut up and let us "just do it"

Remember manufacturing is as important as tourism, possibly even MORE valuable to our residents for long-term income.

For our business, Rotorua and the rest of New Zealand, we need the Iran war to end as domestic and international visitors have so much less disposable income for travel due to the price of fuel.

Rotorua NZ do a great job, LOVE the Robe Trip campaign and think it is so good for our region

Rotorua has the ingredients to outperform, but the focus needs to be on execution - lifting productivity, modernising how businesses operate, and backing local capability.

We are a home-hosted B&B and largely host guests from Europe. A European travel agency we work with (our no. 1 supplier) are very positive about future travel to NZ and expect big increases going forward. All our guests absolutely love their time in Rotorua and we love helping them plan their activities and dining out. Overall, our experience of running our business in Rotorua is very positive. We appreciate that council don't hinder us in the running of our business and we hope it stays that way. We are proud to promote this city and contribute to its economy.

Behind the rest

it seems ironic that we don't promote the water activities on our doorstep. ie fishing etc

I would love to see Rotorua have some sort of challenge to our own people on how we present ourselves. Our standards of personal presentation are just not what they need to be.

Keep up the great work, and keep reminding us when we forget to complete surveys :)



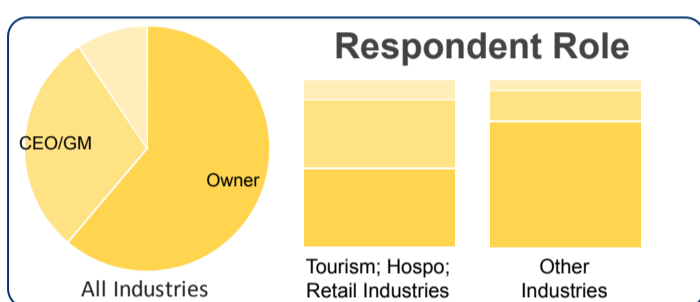
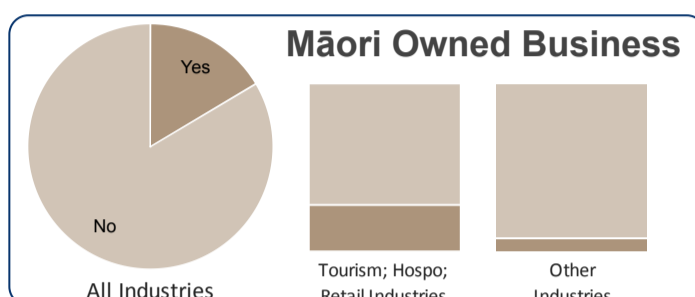
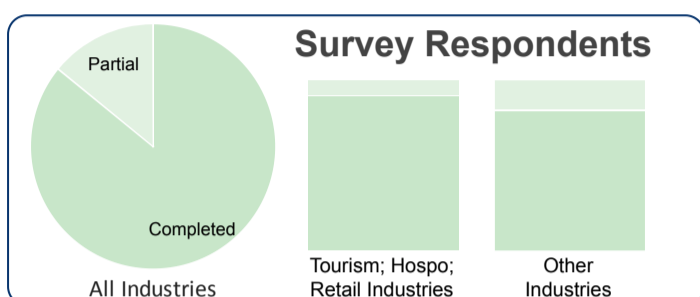
85 Rotorua business people participated in the April 2026 survey, a decline from 96 respondents in October 2025. A cross-section of businesses from different industries participated, with 90% of respondents being the owner or CEO of the business.

There was a broad distribution of different sized businesses, from small SMEs to large 51+ employee operations. 16% of respondents were Māori owned businesses, an increase from 13% in the October 2025 survey.

Select Survey Period: April 2026 (1) ▾

237 Rotorua business people were invited to participate in the April 2026 Rotorua Business Pulse Survey with 85 people making a submission, which equates to a 36% response rate.

[Click here>>>](#) to register your interest in participating in future Rotorua Business Pulse Surveys.



## Which industries does your business operate in?

Businesses which identify as being in the 'Tourism and Accommodation' industry, 'Hospitality and Food Services' industry, or Retail industry are categorised as 'Tourism; Hospo; Retail Industries' even if they also identify as being in another industry. Businesses which do not identify as being in one of those three industries are categorised as 'Other Industries'.

	Apr 2022	Oct 2022	Apr 2023	Oct 2023	Apr 2024	Oct 2024	Apr 2025	Oct 2025	Apr 2026
Tourism and Accommodation	31%	29%	30%	39%	34%	39%	38%	32%	37%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	16%	10%	18%	18%	18%	17%	19%	20%	21%
Hospitality and Food Services	20%	11%	16%	14%	11%	20%	17%	15%	14%
Building and Construction	4%	10%	10%	11%	8%	7%	5%	8%	9%
Manufacturing	7%	11%	13%	8%	9%	10%	9%	10%	9%
Retail	9%	10%	10%	8%	8%	9%	7%	8%	8%
Agriculture	1%	3%	4%	5%	1%	1%	4%	3%	7%
Financial, Legal and Insurance Services	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	6%	8%	6%	7%
Forestry, Farming and Fishing	4%	10%	11%	9%	9%	8%	5%	1%	7%
Other Services	16%	11%	14%	10%	6%	7%	5%	8%	7%
Education and Training	5%	1%	6%	4%	8%	6%	5%	2%	6%
Information Media and Telecommunications	4%	6%	8%	6%	8%	3%	4%	3%	6%
Environmental	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	1%	5%
Wholesale Trade	5%	5%	7%	6%	3%	2%	2%	4%	5%
Transport, Logistics, Postal and Warehousing	3%	6%	4%	5%	5%	2%	3%	4%	2%
Administrative and Support Services	3%	1%	3%	1%	5%	3%	3%	1%	1%
Arts and Recreation Services	1%	0%	7%	2%	3%	5%	1%	1%	1%
Health Care and Social Assistance	4%	4%	6%	3%	5%	3%	3%	4%	1%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1%	4%	4%	2%	3%	3%	1%	2%	0%
Public Administration and Safety	1%	3%	3%	3%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%