

# Rotorua Business Pulse April 2023

Business confidence and positive sentiment in Rotorua builds, driven by the continued resurgence of international tourism. Cost and workforce pressures are leading to future profitability concerns while the business community call for targeted investment.

## Key themes

- Rotorua has experienced an upswing in economic confidence compared to last year, primarily fueled by the rejuvenation of the tourism sector. While confidence in the future remains robust, it is tempered by the prevailing uncertainty in the economic landscape.
- Business optimism leans toward strategy and tourism resurgence, as Rotorua shows resilience and growth.
- Escalating costs related to staffing, inflation, and debt contribute to concerns about profitability and work pipelines, highlighting key challenges for Rotorua businesses.
- Rotorua businesses continue to respond to the tightening labour environment, while some are exploring possibilities with AI.
- Climate change has resulted in heightened operational expenses and supply chain disruptions for a third of Rotorua's businesses.
- One in five businesses choose not to fly out of Rotorua Airport due to flight schedules and reliability.
- In spite of enduring challenges with public perception related to emergency housing, a sense of optimism for the future is apparent in the more balanced viewpoints expressed by survey respondents. Participants emphasised the need for infrastructure investments, particularly in the CBD, within the upcoming year.

## Background

The Rotorua Business Pulse initiative represents a collaborative effort between RotoruaNZ and the Rotorua Business Chamber, aimed at offering business leaders (including owners, CEOs, and General Managers) a platform to express their perspectives on the local economy and assess their businesses across key metrics. The third survey in the programme, conducted between March 22 and April 14 2023, received responses from 93 Rotorua-based businesses. Note that the survey period only had a few days crossover with the release of the Rotorua Lakes Council Draft Annual Plan (11 April) and minimal responses were received during this time.

# Rotorua has experienced an upswing in economic confidence compared to last year, primarily fueled by the rejuvenation of the tourism sector. While confidence in the future remains robust, it is tempered by the prevailing uncertainty in the economic landscape.

Rotorua businesses have experienced a significant shift in confidence levels concerning the city over the past year, with a remarkable increase of 90.1 points, from a net -80.2% in April 2022 to +9.9% in April 2023, via -32.9% in October 2022.

While New Zealand as a whole has also seen an improvement, it has been less pronounced, with a change from -68.4% to -39.5% over the same period.

Confidence in individual businesses has remained steady compared to a year ago, consistently surpassing that of both Rotorua and New Zealand as a whole.

In terms of future projections, Rotorua businesses anticipate a modest enhancement in the city's economic situation over the next year, with a change from 5.0% in October 2022 to 8.8% in April 2023. In contrast, the outlook for New Zealand overall has deteriorated, dropping from 2.5% to -7.7%. Despite a decline in net confidence in their

## Explainer

Several questions within the survey take the format of standard business confidence measures, focusing on whether respondents perceive conditions to be deteriorating, remaining the same, or improving. For these particular questions, the outcomes are represented as a net score, calculated by subtracting the percentage of those who perceive deterioration from the percentage of those who perceive improvement. Meanwhile, the remaining results are presented as a straightforward percentage of respondents.

own businesses' economic situation from 39.7% to 28.9%, Rotorua's business confidence remains impressive when juxtaposed with ANZ's Business Outlook April survey net confidence ratings of -43.8% for New Zealand and -7.6% for individual business activity.

According to 63% of survey participants, the inflation peak has yet to be reached, while 26% believe it has already occurred. Notably, this survey was completed prior to StatsNZ's April announcement, which indicated that peak inflation may have already passed. Regarding interest rates, 48% of respondents expect higher rates in 12 months, 14% foresee lower rates, and 34% predict that they will remain unchanged.

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

● % improved ● % deteriorated

	Apr-22	Oct-22	Apr-23	Change
<b>New Zealand</b>	-68.4%	-34.2%	-39.5%	<b>-5.3</b>
<b>Rotorua</b>	-80.2%	-32.9%	+9.9%	<b>+42.8</b>
<b>Your business</b>	-30.2%	+19.2%	+17.8%	<b>-1.4</b>

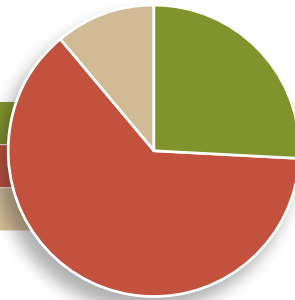
## In 12 months' time, how do you think the economic situation will have changed for...?

● % improved ● % deteriorated

	Apr-22	Oct-22	Apr-23	Change
New Zealand	0.0%	2.5%	-7.7%	<b>-10.2</b>
Rotorua	9.2%	5.0%	8.8%	<b>+3.8</b>
Your business	42.1%	39.7%	28.9%	<b>-10.8</b>

## Do you think we have passed peak inflation?

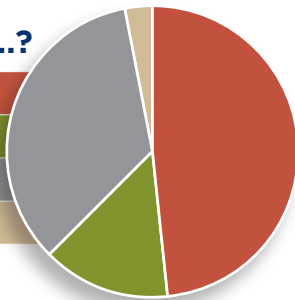
Yes	26%
No	63%
Don't know	11%



Across key business metrics, the costs of conducting business and price increases continue to be nearly universal, with a net +83% and +70% of businesses, respectively, expecting these to rise. Although the net expectation for heightened business activity has slightly decreased by 2 points, a net +43% of businesses still anticipate growth in this domain—a promising outcome considering the steady murmurings of a potential recession. Despite confidence in the pipeline and anticipated price increases, businesses remain unsure about profitability, declining from a net -1% to -7%.

## In 12 months' time do you expect interest rates to be..?

Higher	48%
Lower	14%
The same	34%
Don't know	3%



However, the cost of borrowing appears to have had a significant impact, as the net percentage of businesses planning to invest in their operations has decreased by 15 points to +20%. Staffing numbers have managed to stay relatively stable, with a net +24% of businesses expecting to expand their workforce.

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

● % improved ● % deteriorated

	Apr-22	Oct-22	Apr-23	Change
Costs of doing business	92%	87%	83%	<b>-4</b>
Price of your goods/services	67%	65%	70%	<b>+5</b>
Volume of business activity	53%	45%	43%	<b>-2</b>
Number of staff employed	34%	25%	24%	<b>0</b>
Investments into the business (buildings, plant, equipment)	30%	35%	20%	<b>-15</b>
Profitability	-7%	-1%	-7%	<b>-5</b>

# Business optimism leans toward strategy and tourism resurgence, as Rotorua shows resilience and growth

Regarding the aspects that businesses feel most optimistic about, a significant shift has occurred. Business strategy has experienced a substantial increase, rising by 14 points to 30%. In contrast, forward work/sales pipelines, which topped the list of positive aspects in October 2022, have decreased by 10 points to 17%. Organisational culture remains relatively stable, experiencing a slight decrease to 21%. On a positive note, the proportion of businesses not positive about anything has declined by 4 points to 1%.

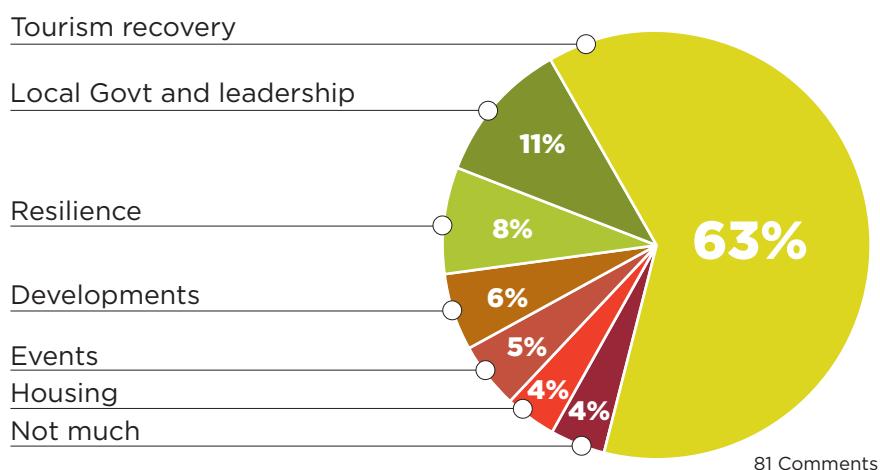
When asked about the most positive aspects of Rotorua, the revival of the tourism sector emerged as the top response by a significant margin, with 63%—an increase from 48% in the October survey. Other prevalent themes include the new Council and Mayor, key developments, and general resilience.

## What is the number one thing you feel most positive about currently for your business?

● % improved ● % deteriorated

	Apr-22	Oct-22	Apr-23	Change
Business strategy	16%	16%	30%	<b>+14</b>
Organisational culture	20%	22%	21%	<b>-1</b>
Forward work/sales in the pipeline	23%	27%	17%	<b>-10</b>
Ability to generate profitability	4%	6%	10%	<b>+5</b>
Business survival (staying afloat)	9%	8%	7%	<b>-1</b>
Debt levels	5%	6%	5%	<b>-1</b>
Other - please specify	3%	3%	3%	<b>+1</b>
Retaining skilled staff	5%	4%	2%	<b>-2</b>
Ability to invest capital in the business	1%	3%	2%	<b>0</b>
Retaining unskilled staff			1%	<b>+1</b>
I am not positive about anything for our business	3%	6%	1%	<b>-4</b>

## What are you most positive about for Rotorua over the next 12 months?





# Escalating costs associated with staffing, inflation and debt contribute to apprehensions surrounding profitability, reflecting key concerns for businesses in Rotorua

Inflationary forces and labour market challenges continue to impact Rotorua businesses. As previously noted, a substantial majority of businesses anticipate rising costs, with 56% showing significant concern about inflation, a figure that has unexpectedly decreased by 13 points from the top spot in October 2022. Consequently, most businesses intend to increase prices, although seemingly not to a sufficient extent, as 38% express concerns about profitability—an 8 point increase from October 2022. Debt level concerns are likely to contribute to this sentiment, with a 5 point rise to 24%.

The challenge of finding skilled staff remains a prominent issue, with 61% of businesses expressing high levels of concern, although this represents a 2 point decrease compared to October 2022. This remains a challenge across all different sectors. Staff retention concerns have slightly diminished by 3 points to 51% but continue to be the third most pressing area of concern.

Regulatory and policy hurdles remain significant, with 49% of businesses expressing concern with issues related to Central Government — a 3% increase since October 2022. Business comments primarily revolved around wage and employment legislation, alongside a mix of immigration, compliance, the Resource Management Act, and general dissatisfaction with the current Government's perceived anti-business stance. Local Government concerns have decreased by 10 points to 30%, mainly relating to emergency housing and insufficient investment.

Climate change, as a new addition to the survey, emerged as the fifth highest concern for business owners. There has been a reduction in the levels of concern surrounding immigration, work in the pipeline and export conditions. However, 14% of businesses are highly concerned about survival (an increase of 6 points) which warrants further attention.



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

Very + extremely concerned

	Apr-22	Oct-22	Apr-23	Change
Finding skilled staff	68%	63%	61%	-2
Inflation - cost of goods/services	71%	69%	56%	-13
Retaining skilled staff	48%	53%	51%	-3
Regulatory and policy challenges - Central Government		47%	49%	+3
Climate change			43%	
Ability to generate profitability	40%	31%	38%	+8
Regulatory and policy challenges - Local Government		40%	30%	-10
Immigration settings		35%	29%	-5
Supply chain/shortages	33%	29%	27%	-2
Retaining unskilled staff	25%	24%	24%	0
Ability to invest capital in the business	23%	24%	24%	0
Finding unskilled staff	27%	25%	24%	-2
Debt levels (cost of borrowing)	19%	19%	24%	+5
Forward work/sales in the pipeline	21%	20%	17%	-3
Business survival (staying afloat)	15%	8%	14%	+6
Export conditions	19%	20%	11%	-9

Business leaders were asked about the primary concern that keeps them awake at night. The challenge of finding skilled staff remains a major concern for 17% of businesses, albeit a 4% decrease from October 2022. Closely following is retaining skilled staff, with a doubling from 7% to 15%. Concerns about upcoming work have declined from 13% to 7%. Notably, there has been a significant surge in business owners losing sleep over profitability concerns, which have risen from 3% to 11%.

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

	Apr-22	Oct-22	Apr-23	Change
Finding skilled staff	24%	21%	17%	-4
Retaining skilled staff	4%	7%	15%	+8
Nothing keeps me awake at night	8%	11%	12%	+2
Ability to generate profitability	16%	3%	11%	+9
Forward work/sales in the pipeline	8%	13%	7%	-7
Business survival (staying afloat)	8%	5%	7%	+1
Other - please specify	4%	4%	7%	+3
Regulatory and policy challenges - Central Government		8%	6%	-2
Debt levels (cost of borrowing)	3%	8%	6%	-2
Inflation - cost of goods/services sold	5%	5%	5%	-1
Climate change			5%	
Retaining unskilled staff			2%	
Regulatory and policy challenges - Local Government		1%	1%	0
Supply chain/shortages			1%	



# Rotorua businesses continue to respond to the tightening labour environment, while some are exploring possibilities with AI

The competitive labour market continues to compel businesses to adapt. 70% of businesses offer flexible working hours, although this has dropped 9 pts. 64% of Rotorua businesses currently pay the living wage or higher to all employees. Additionally, 62% of businesses plan to hire new staff within the next

12 months and 55% have existing vacancies to be filled. Of these businesses, half provide employees with the option to work from home, with 48% offering this flexibility, in line with the previous survey.

A change has also been observed in the number of businesses with carbon policies in place, declining from 41% in October 2022 to 31% in April 2023 – which may be due to sample variation. There has been little change in the integration of elements of Māori culture into business operations, with 46% of businesses doing this.

Nearly a quarter of businesses are exploring opportunities to incorporate AI technology into their business operations. 12% are looking to change the capital structure in the next year.

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

	Apr-22	Oct-22	Apr-23	Change
We offer flexible working hours to employees (for roles where this is possible)	54%	79%	70%	-9
We pay the living wage or higher to all staff	62%	68%	64%	-3
We plan to hire additional staff in the next 12 months	57%	63%	62%	-2
We currently have vacancies that need to be filled	47%	52%	55%	+3
Our staff have the option to work from home (for roles where this is possible)	45%	49%	48%	-2
We incorporate Māori cultural elements into our business practices		47%	46%	0
We have policies in place to reduce carbon emissions	26%	41%	31%	-10
We are exploring AI technologies (e.g. ChatGPT) to be incorporated into our business			23%	
We are expecting to change our capital structure in the next 12 months			12%	
None of the above	10%	3%	4%	+1

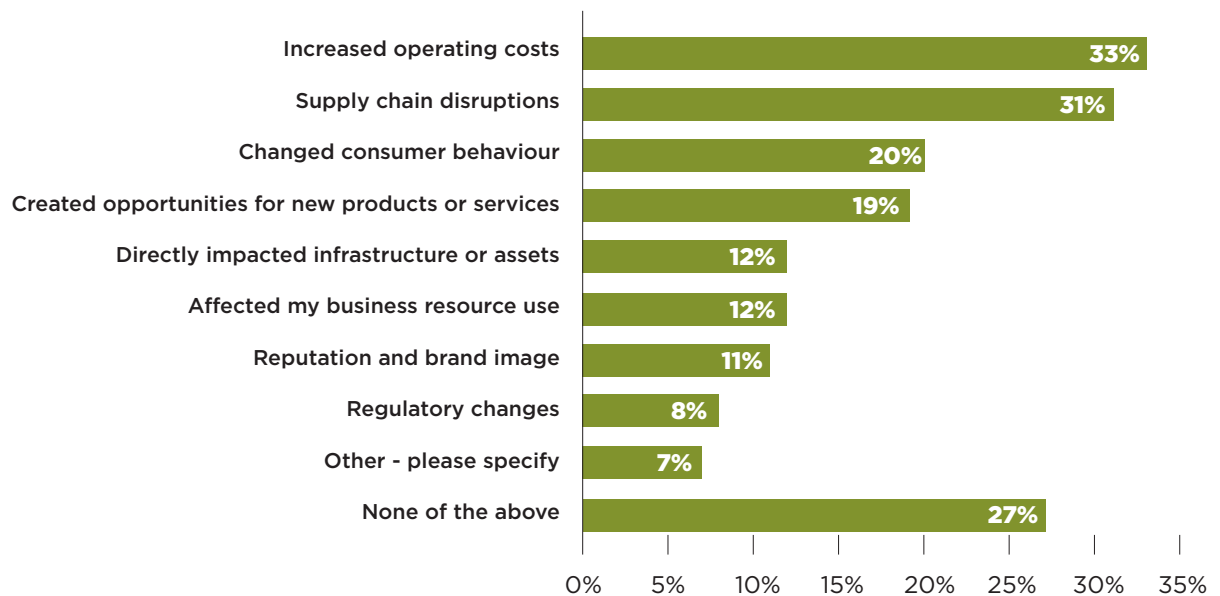


# Climate change has resulted in heightened operational expenses and supply chain disruptions for a third of Rotorua's businesses

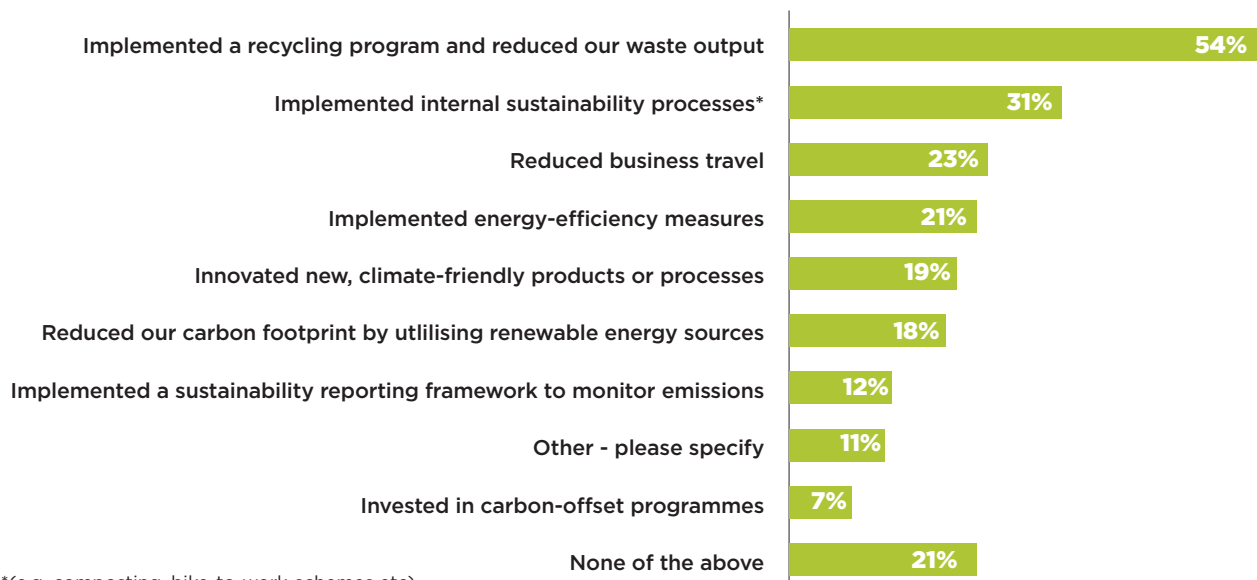
Considering recent climate change-related weather events in New Zealand, we included several relevant questions in this survey. Climate change has significantly impacted businesses over the last year, with 33% reporting increased operating costs and 31% facing supply chain disruptions. Despite the challenges, 19% of companies identified new opportunities for products or services related to climate change.

To play their part in mitigating the impact of climate change, businesses have adopted various strategies, such as implementing recycling programs, reducing business travel, enhancing energy efficiency and developing climate-friendly products or processes. Notably, only 12% of businesses are measuring their footprint and even fewer are offsetting.

## How, if at all, has climate change impacted your business over the last 12 months?



## What actions, if any, has your business taken to mitigate the impacts of climate change?



\* (e.g. composting, bike-to-work-schemes etc)

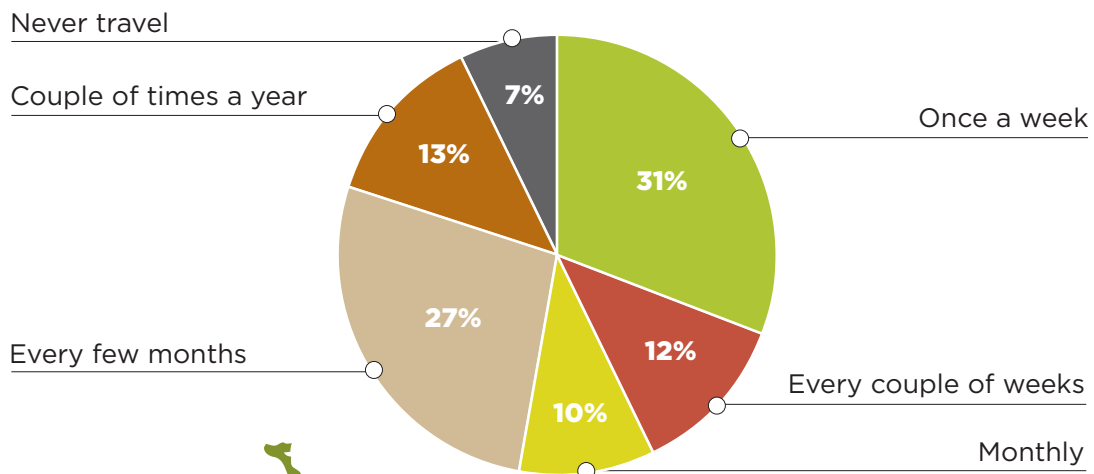


# One in five businesses choose not to fly out of Rotorua Airport due to flight schedules and reliability

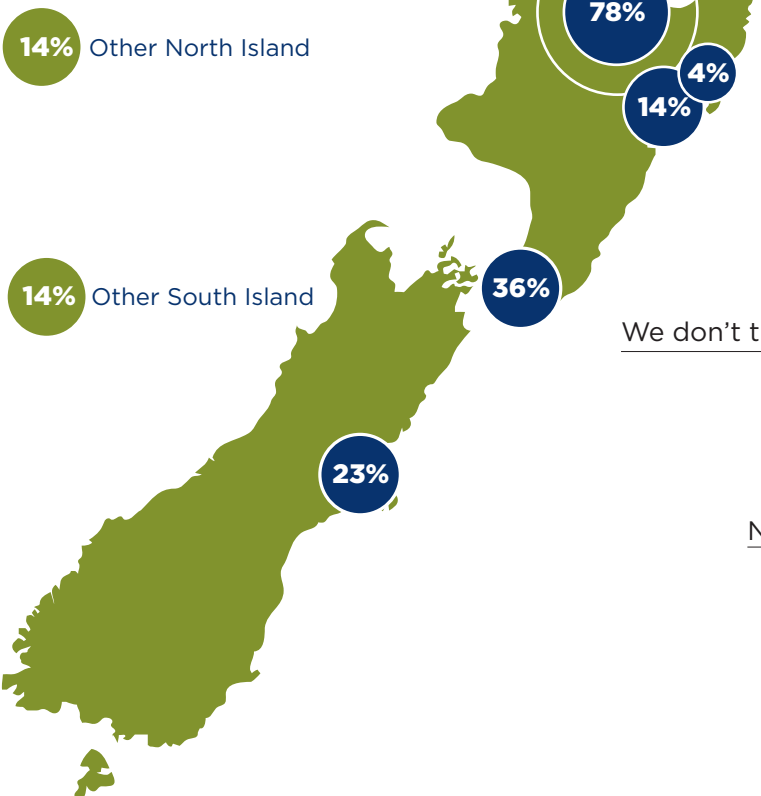


We also asked a number of questions in the survey about business travel. Business travel frequency varies, with 31% of employees travelling once a week or more and 7% never travelling. The most common domestic destinations include nearby cities (78%), Auckland (64%), and Wellington (36%). When travelling by air, 63% of employees typically depart from Rotorua Airport, while others opt for alternatives like Tauranga or Auckland due to flight frequency, reliability or scheduling concerns.

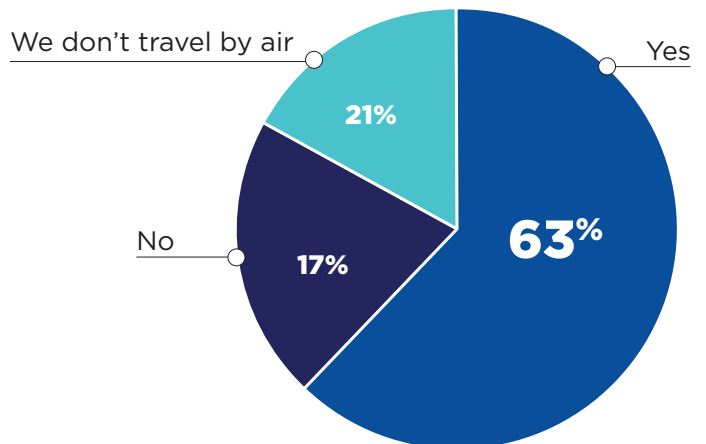
## How often do you, or your employees, travel for work?



## Where does your business travel domestically for work?



## If travelling by air, do you or your employees typically depart from Rotorua Airport?



# A sense of optimism for the future is apparent in the more balanced viewpoints expressed by businesses. Participants emphasised the need for targeted investment

In this survey there has been a noticeable change in outlook compared to October 2022. While concerns about emergency housing and perception challenges remain, the overall tone in April 2023 is more optimistic and resilient.

The focus of comments has shifted towards the positive impact of the return of international tourism and a strong feeling among the business community about the need for further investment in Rotorua. These investments aim to make the area more attractive to potential workers and visitors, representing a key step in rebuilding our reputation and brand.

When asked to provide one word to describe the current state of Rotorua, the April data presents a far more optimistic view compared to the October survey. While some negative terms, such as "struggling" "unsafe" and "stagnant" still appear, there is an increased presence of positive words like "improving", "recovering", "rejuvenation" and "resilient." The April dataset also highlights a sense of transition and potential, with terms such as "rebuilding", "reclaiming" and "possibilities."

The charts below show the words themed into different groupings. In October, almost 80% of the words conveyed negative sentiment. In April however, this has dropped to around 40%, with 55% positive. While there is still room for improvement, this is a massive change in sentiment over a short time period.

*I think there is a lot to be positive about for Rotorua. We have maintained resilience over the past three years dealing with Covid, emergency housing etc. It seems like international visitors are returning and people are just getting on with life. Opportunities for investment in our business alongside other partners is looking promising and as a business, I am expecting some big milestones in the coming year.*

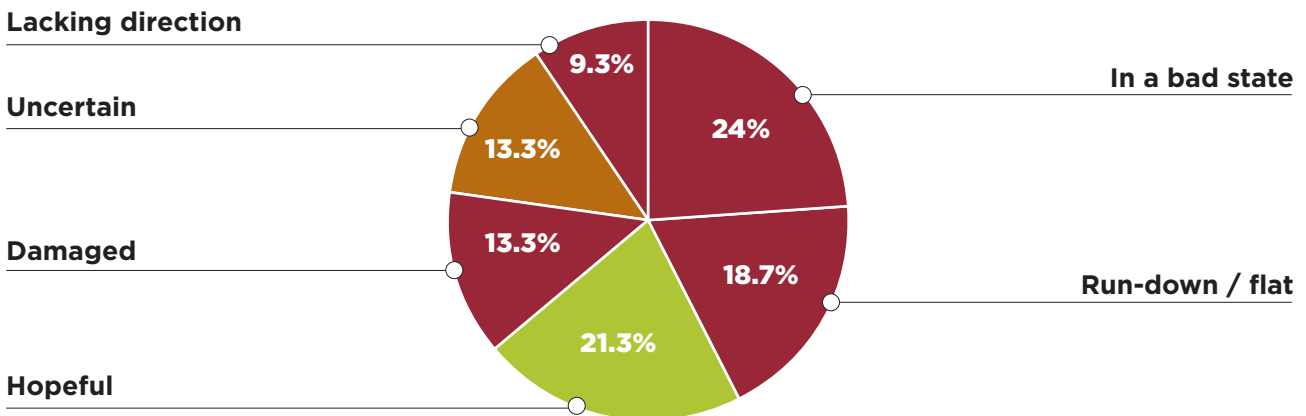
*The city needs a plan to make sure we can offer more than our neighbours to attract talent and families to want to move to and live in Rotorua. We need to make sure we can offer great community and business facilities for everyone that lives here and to attract and keep people here.*

*Need a strategy for changing the CBD into a quality business area that will attract companies out of Auckland*

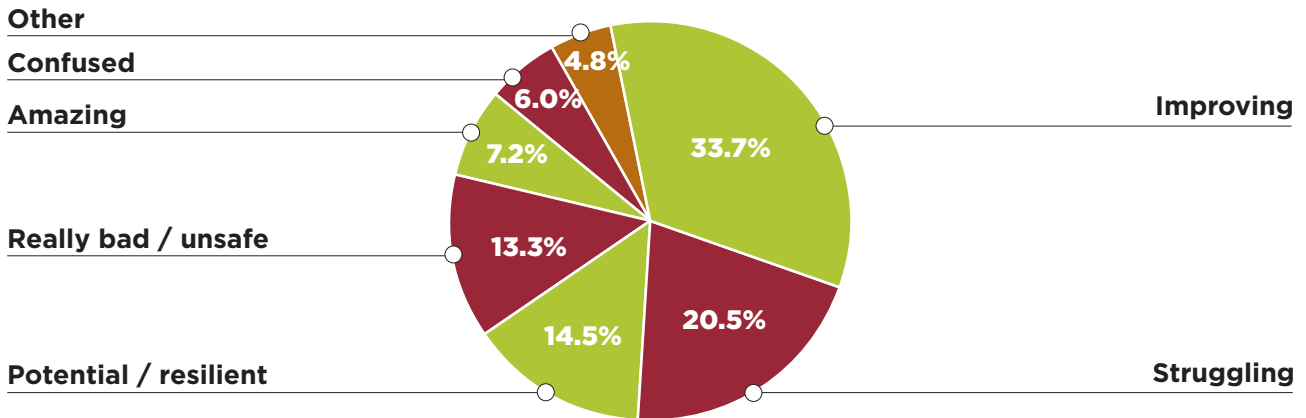
*I am hoping the new Council can see the benefit of investing in Rotorua and don't strip all investments away.*

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

October 2022 results



## April 2023 results



In October 2022 we asked the business community what the new Council's top priority should be. Resoundingly they responded that emergency housing / Fenton Street needed to be sorted. This time we posed a similar question – 'What do you think should be the highest priority for Rotorua over the next 12 months?'. While emergency housing and safety did feature to a small degree, the main focus of the comments were around ensuring that we are revitalising our CBD and making the city vibrant and attractive for both residents and visitors. Tied in closely with this, rebuilding reputation and restoring our image also came through as top priorities for business leaders.

These comments suggest that tangible progress has been made in reducing the visibility and scale of emergency housing in Rotorua. More importantly, however, the business community is now calling for targeted investment in Rotorua to reverse the negative reputational impact that has accumulated over recent years.

- “ Continued or new investment into public / visitor facing projects (eg. Eat Street 2, the forest, CBD, lakefront).
- “ Investment into core infrastructure (not the Museum) including our CBD and three waters.
- “ Making sure the city has great community facilities, to not only attract people to want to move to and live in Rotorua but enable national events to be delivered in Rotorua bringing in revenue to the city.
- “ To turn around the media and show a more positive face of Rotorua. Create a positive attitude and attract investment and growth.

## Demographic profile of respondents

93 Rotorua businesses participated in the survey, an increase from 83 businesses in October 2022. A cross-section of businesses from different industries participated, with more than 80% of respondents being the owner, CEO or Director of the business.

There was a broad distribution of different sized businesses, from small SMEs to large, 51+ employee operations. 17% of respondents were Māori owned businesses, an increase from October.



*The location is ideal, being close to Rotorua to attract and retain staff, while also being near two large world-class forests.*



## Red Stag Timber

### Tim Rigter - General Manager

One of our city's largest employers, Red Stag Timber, employs 400 full-time staff and another 35 staff at sister company Red Stag TimberLab.

The company mills, kiln-dries, planes, treats and remanufactures more than 630,000m<sup>2</sup> of Radiata Pine and Douglas Fir lumber per annum. The products are sold in New Zealand and exported to Australia, Pacific Islands, Asia, Africa, Europe and North America, resulting in an annual turnover of over NZ\$300 million.

Red Stag was established in 2003 to operate the Waipa Mill which was originally founded by the Government in 1939 and subsequently privatised in 1996.

Citing several key factors to Red Stag's success and longevity, Tim starts with its very knowledgeable and motivated workforce.

"Some of us still remember the receivership, which was a very motivating experience. The site has been operating since 1939 and a tremendous amount of knowledge has been built up on the site by the team here.

"The location is ideal, being close to Rotorua to attract and retain staff, while also being near two large world-class forests.

"We have all our operations on one site which makes for easier communication to the staff on-site and good logistics. We are a large site, 75 hectares, and so had room to expand.

"We had owners willing to invest in new technology to get us to become a world-class operation. It is well known to many saw-millers around the world due to this. We have scale: we now produce three times the volume of 20 years ago with 50% more staff.

"We also generate all our energy requirements for heat and power from our co-generation plant where our fuel source is renewable sawdust, shavings and bark. We are a net exporter of power."

Besides its revenue and providing a large employment base for Rotorua, Red Stag contributes to the community by continuously supporting many activities, events and projects. It's not uncommon to see Red Stag as a sponsor with naming rights, including the Red Stag Rotorua Marathon.

The company was also recognised by the industry, earning 2023 Timber Supplier of the Year at the Hardware Awards, where a major customer category, Merchants (e.g., Placemakers, ITM and Mitre 10), selected Red Stag to win this award over all other timber suppliers.

While the last 12 months have provided some challenges, such as a slower residential market and less demand for products, the company is staying true to its long-term commitment to further develop its product range and market base.

"Red Stag Timber is currently expanding its sawmill capacity by 10% by installing a new stacker, Trimline and another 90 bins.

"We are also halfway through doubling our boron treatment capacity by building a second plant. These projects are valued at \$60 million. We are also spending another \$25 million on improvements around the site including our sewerage pond system, stormwater controls, safety projects and a new turbine that will improve our conversion of renewable fuels into energy. We are approximately a third of the way through these projects and it will take another 12-18 months to complete."

Tim says he's "very optimistic" about Red Stag's future in Rotorua.





“

*We knew that the business would get busier but we didn't know exactly when it would get busier.*

RYDGES

ROTORUA

## Rydges Rotorua

### Kent Breeze - General Manager

Accommodation is a priority sector for RotoruaNZ and it's vital for Rotorua that this segment of the city's business portfolio recovers well post-Covid. Accommodation providers are big ratepayers, employers and purchasers. Rydges Rotorua alone spends more than \$1 million a year on food.

"People like Bidfood tell me that their number of employees is a result of us purchasing from them, so there's a knock-on effect there," says Kent Breeze, General Manager of Rydges Rotorua.

Kent says he's 100 percent optimistic about the future of Rotorua.

"You don't have to be a genius to look around Rotorua at Easter and see the busyness – the place was humming, it was amazing. There were people everywhere, all the accommodation rooms were full and the attractions and activities were busy."

In July last year, Holiday Inn rebranded and became Rydges Rotorua. Kent was overseeing the refurbishments of the hotel, while working to get his staffing up to pre-Covid levels (he's nearly there, just needs 6-8 more people) and focusing on upskilling his managers. He has also joined the Rotorua Housing Accord committee to work toward building a better housing and urban future for Rotorua.

"I'm excited that we have re-emerged from Covid. The Hotel is really well positioned when benchmarked against pre-covid performance, so we've sprung back faster in many ways, than we anticipated."

Kent says the biggest challenge of the last 12 months was that bounce-back period post-pandemic.

"We knew that the business would get busier but we didn't know exactly when it would be busier. You have to have more revenue than costs, so you can't just go and get 100 extra staff in and then wait until you get busy, so there was the question of how to anticipate all of that. November onwards has been significantly busier, especially since January, which has been great, but it's had its growing pains as well. It's a positive challenge, but a challenge nonetheless.

"Because the business is so strong, we were able to engage our owners in a conversation about extending the refurbishments (that took place during Covid), which we've just started. It's great to see investment coming in and it gives people confidence about the future.

"We're doing a whole lot of work on development for middle management. We've got a number of middle managers including Housekeeping, Food and Beverage, Front Office, and Kitchen teams on some external leadership development – all organised by our parent company EVT. Some are getting certification. That's something that is needed in the industry, developing that middle management capability."

Besides investing in the building and staff, Rydges invests in the community by sponsoring Rotorua Trails Trust and Rotorua Mountain Bike Club First Response Unit in the forest.

The company also works continually to not increase its footprint. All hot water on the property is geothermally heated, they have several recycling programmes, zero plastic water bottles, a water fountain for guests to refill their water bottles, and carafes and glasses in the guest rooms.



*The attraction was the Rotorua lifestyle – the lakes forest, and multicultural aspect – and the opportunity with Holland Beckett.*



## Holland Beckett Law

### James McDougall - Partner

After practising law in Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland and most recently two years in London, James McDougall said when he and his partner were deciding where in New Zealand to locate themselves, they chose Rotorua to settle in and start a family.

“The attraction was the Rotorua lifestyle – the lakes, forest and multicultural aspect – and the opportunity with Holland Beckett,” he says. “I had come to Rotorua as a child to see grandparents during holidays, but otherwise my partner Caitlin and I didn’t have any connection.”

An experienced litigator, James is a Partner at Holland Beckett Law (HOBEC), leading the Rotorua litigation team and advising clients on a broad range of issues.

While HOBEC has been in Rotorua for 10 years, the firm has been in business for 85. The Rotorua team has been steadily growing and currently employs 19 locals.

James says HOBEC’s success is partly due to understanding their client’s needs and providing sound legal advice. They also assist businesses and iwi organisations to grow, achieve their goals and manage risks, resulting in a more resilient and growing economy. But there’s more to it than that, he says.

“We recognise that we exist to serve the community. We do this through assisting businesses and individuals with their legal needs, but just as importantly, through volunteering and pro-bono work. All staff are encouraged to volunteer their expertise and time to community organisations and causes they are passionate about.

Various charities, trusts and sports organisations are some of the recipients of pro-bono work. Staff sit as trustees and committee members on various community and national organisations that work within Rotorua and the surrounding area. They also sponsor and make donations to other organisations. James himself is a Trustee of the Rotorua Bike Festival Trust and sits on other community committees.

A recent highlight for the firm was establishing a summer clerking programme with Pukeroa Oruawhata and Ngāti Whakaue for Ngāti Whakaue law students.

“The programme provides the students with an opportunity to gain experience working in a local law firm and reinforces that there are great roles available here in Rotorua in which they can further their careers and be involved in their community. We were pleased to offer our first Ngāti Whakaue clerk a permanent graduate role on the back of their enthusiasm, contributions and potential to help develop them into a great lawyer and iwi leader.”

Another highlight from last year was an enhanced parental leave policy to better support our staff and their families. Primary carers receive six months of full pay, employer KiwiSaver contributions, and assistance with returning to work. Secondary carers receive four weeks of fully paid leave which can be used over 12 months, and both are entitled to special leave leading up to the birth or adoption of their child.

While the economic cycle over the last 12 months has seen costs increase, impacting local businesses – including HOBEC and their staff and clients – James is optimistic about the long term.

“The fundamentals that make Rotorua a great place to live, work and play will always remain. The city seems to be bouncing back and key industries holding their own. There are opportunities for Rotorua and it is important we avoid reactive, short-sighted decisions. Key organisations and businesses need to continue to lead, plan and invest in the city and its strategic direction.”





“

*The fundamentals that make Rotorua a great place to live, work and play will always remain. The city seems to be bouncing back and key industries holding their own. There are opportunities for Rotorua and it is important we avoid reactive, short-sighted decisions. Key organisations and businesses need to continue to lead, plan and invest in the city and its strategic direction.*

**James McDougall**

Partner - Holland Beckett Law





If you have any questions, please email  
[insights@rotoruanz.com](mailto:insights@rotoruanz.com)

To download the report, please visit  
[rotoruanz.com/business-pulse-survey](https://rotoruanz.com/business-pulse-survey)



Use this QR code to sign up to participate in the next Business Pulse Survey