

2025/2026 BUSINESS HEALTH SURVEY ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

The City of Stonnington invited local businesses to complete the 2025/2026 Business Health Survey in August and September 2025, sharing their needs, priorities and challenges.

Insights from this biennial survey will guide improvements to Council's services and ensure future support programs align with local business priorities.

City of STONNINGTON

Engagement response

864
surveys completed in August and September 2025

Top 3 industries participants operated in
(n=820)

35%
Retail trade

19%
Accommodation and food services

11%
Healthcare and social assistance

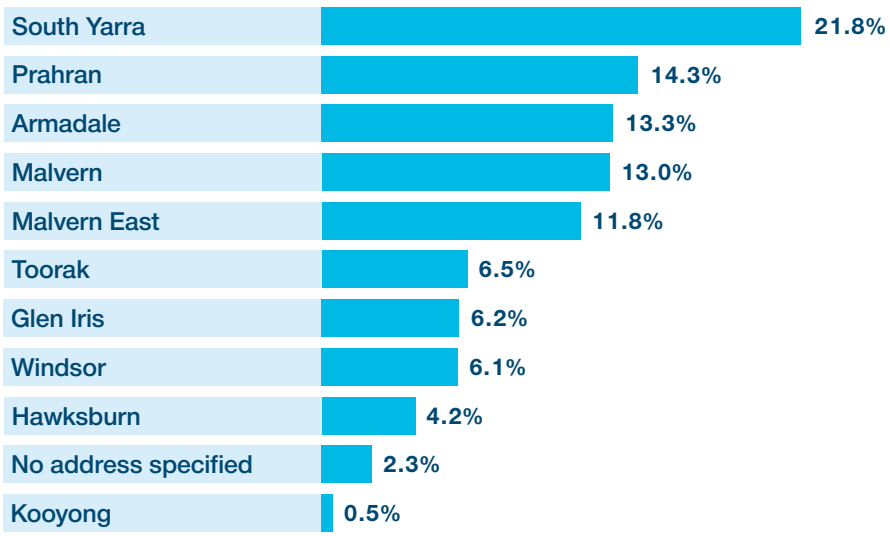
Top 3 businesses by property type
(n=771)

69%
Retail shopfront

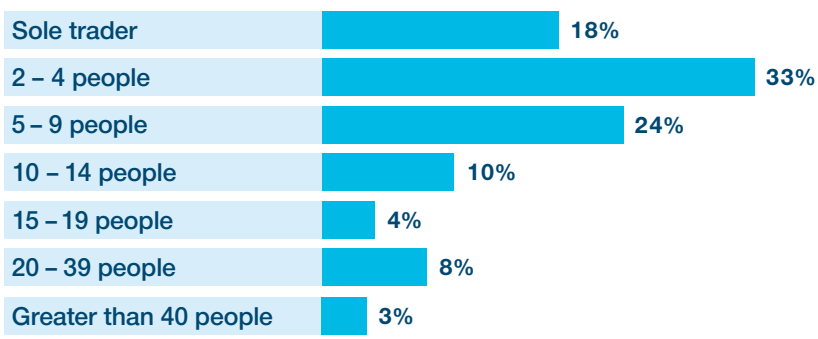
11%
Office space

8%
Home based

Business by location
(n=754)



Size of business
(n=747)



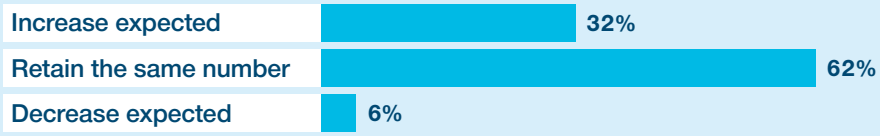
Business insights

32%
of business are looking to employ within the next 12 months
(n=757)

68%
of business have been operating in Stonnington for 5 years or longer
(n=746)

Business performance compared to one year ago (n=722)	**28%** Better	**39%** The same	**33%** Worse
Business performance expected one year from now (n=734)	**52%** Better	**37%** The same	**11%** Worse

Do you plan to change your staff headcount in the next 12 months? (n=756)



Business challenges

Top 5 economic challenges impacting your business in the next 12 months (n=715)

70%
Economic downturn/ uncertainty

52%
Declining consumer spending

43%
Increasing utility and overhead costs

41%
High commercial rent

35%
Rising production costs

Top 5 staffing challenges (n=502)

71%
Finding employees with the right skills

40%
Adjusting employee levels during busy and slow periods

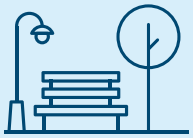
22%
General labour market shortages

19%
Employees commuting/ getting to work

18%
Providing flexible working arrangements

Business opportunities

Top 5 things you think would make doing business in Stonnington easier (n=668)



62%
Improving public spaces, amenities, streetscapes



40%
Improving the customer experience in precincts



35%
Precinct activations (e.g. events, art, outdoor dining and trading)



29%
Implementing precinct branding and promotion



16%
Advocating to improve access to transport

Top 5 things businesses would like Council to prioritise to support local businesses (n=658)



38%
Business grant funding opportunities



35%
Facilitating precinct activations



31%
Clear communication about Council's business services



28%
Destination or local area marketing support



27%
Simplifying business permit processes

Top 5 professional development topics businesses would find most valuable for Council to deliver in the next 12 months (n=626)



47%
Grant funding opportunities



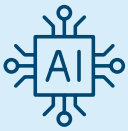
35%
Finding new markets and customers



33%
Marketing and branding strategies



26%
Digital marketing and design



21%
Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for business

NOTES: Data in this report is from survey responses from businesses within Stonnington, and any responses where the business address was not specified. Survey responses from business addresses outside Stonnington are excluded from this snapshot. Survey ran from 4 August - 7 September 2025. Information collected from this survey will help shape the programs and initiatives Council deliver to support our business community. n=values denote the total number of survey responses received for each question.

For more information on the business supports, training events, grants, permits and economic data available from Council, please contact:

businessconcierge@stonnington.vic.gov.au

stonnington.vic.gov.au/business