



**Business
Canterbury**
Our Chamber of Commerce

Quarterly Canterbury Business Survey

February 2025 | In field: 13 February - 28 February

Canterbury's first quarterly business survey of 2025 reveals a complex landscape, global concerns are rising, yet local resilience is strengthening.

For the first time, international trade and geopolitical risks have emerged among the top six business concerns, which is expected given the increasing uncertainty surrounding the current global economic turbulence and evolving political landscapes.

However, confidence in managing disruption has reached its highest level since tracking began in 2022, with 80% reporting feeling confident, showing a shift from reaction to anticipation.

Financial outlooks remain steady, with 58% of businesses positive about their earnings for the year ahead.

Yet, persistent challenges remain, including concerns around consumer confidence and demand, productivity and growth restraints and ongoing inflationary and interest rate pressures.

While the recent OCR cut may provide relief, broader structural shifts will be needed to sustain long-term growth.

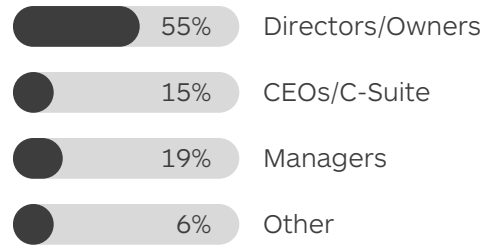
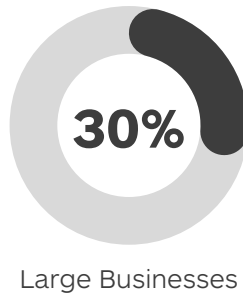
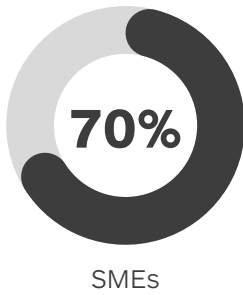
Members can access the full analysis and media release on our website for more detailed insights from our Chief Executive, Leeann Watson.



Canterbury Snapshot



Respondents



Top issues

1. Consumer confidence and demand
2. Productivity and growth
3. Inflation and interest rates
4. Cashflow and account receivable/payable
5. Compliance costs
6. International Trade and Geopolitical Risks

Top Industry Response

1. Manufacturing
2. Professional services
3. Construction and civil
4. Hospitality, Accommodation, Retail & Toursim
5. Primary Industries and Argriculture

69%

Expect the Canterbury economy to be stronger in 12 months.

57%

Expect to invest in property, plant, and equipment within the next 12 months.

58%

Expect to hire new staff within the next 12 months.

66%

Expect stronger financial performance over the next 12 months.

36%

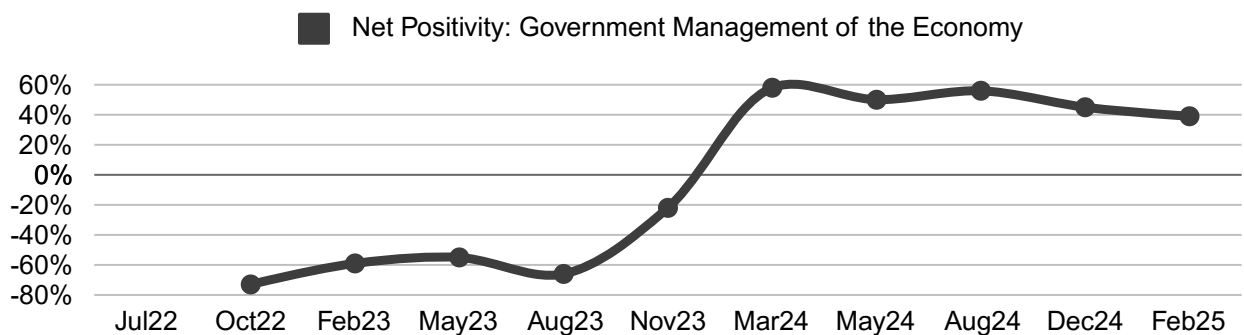
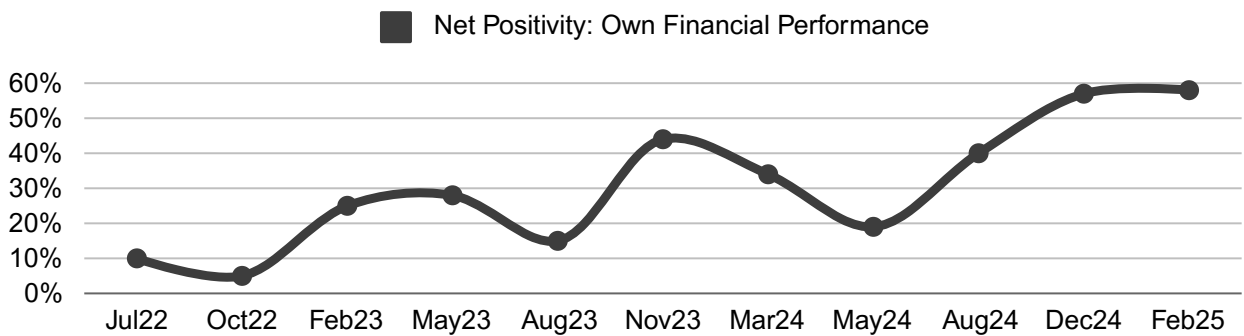
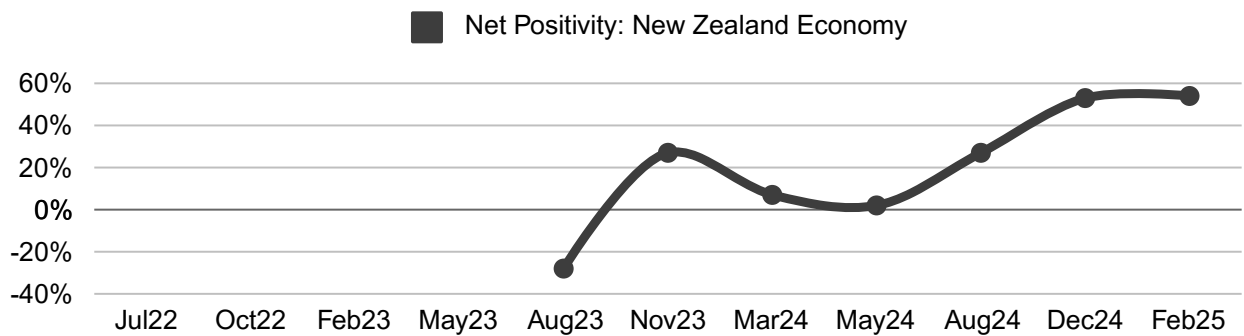
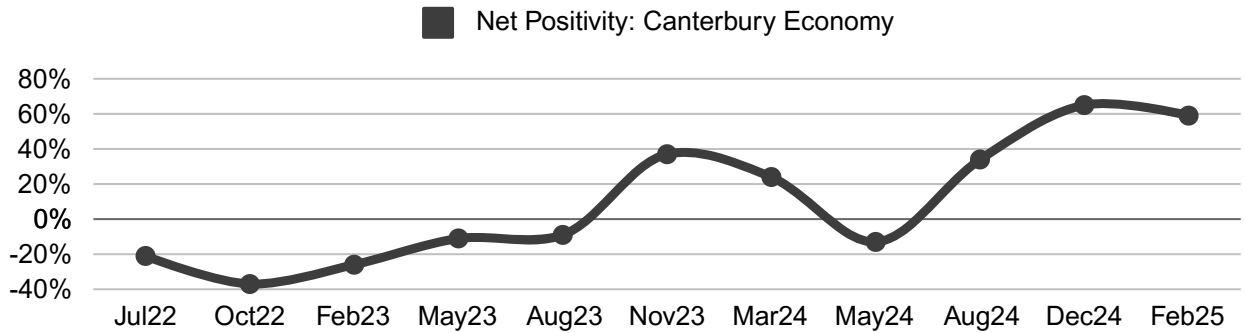
Are experiencing significant impacts from rising costs.

80%

Are confident in their ability to deal with disruption.

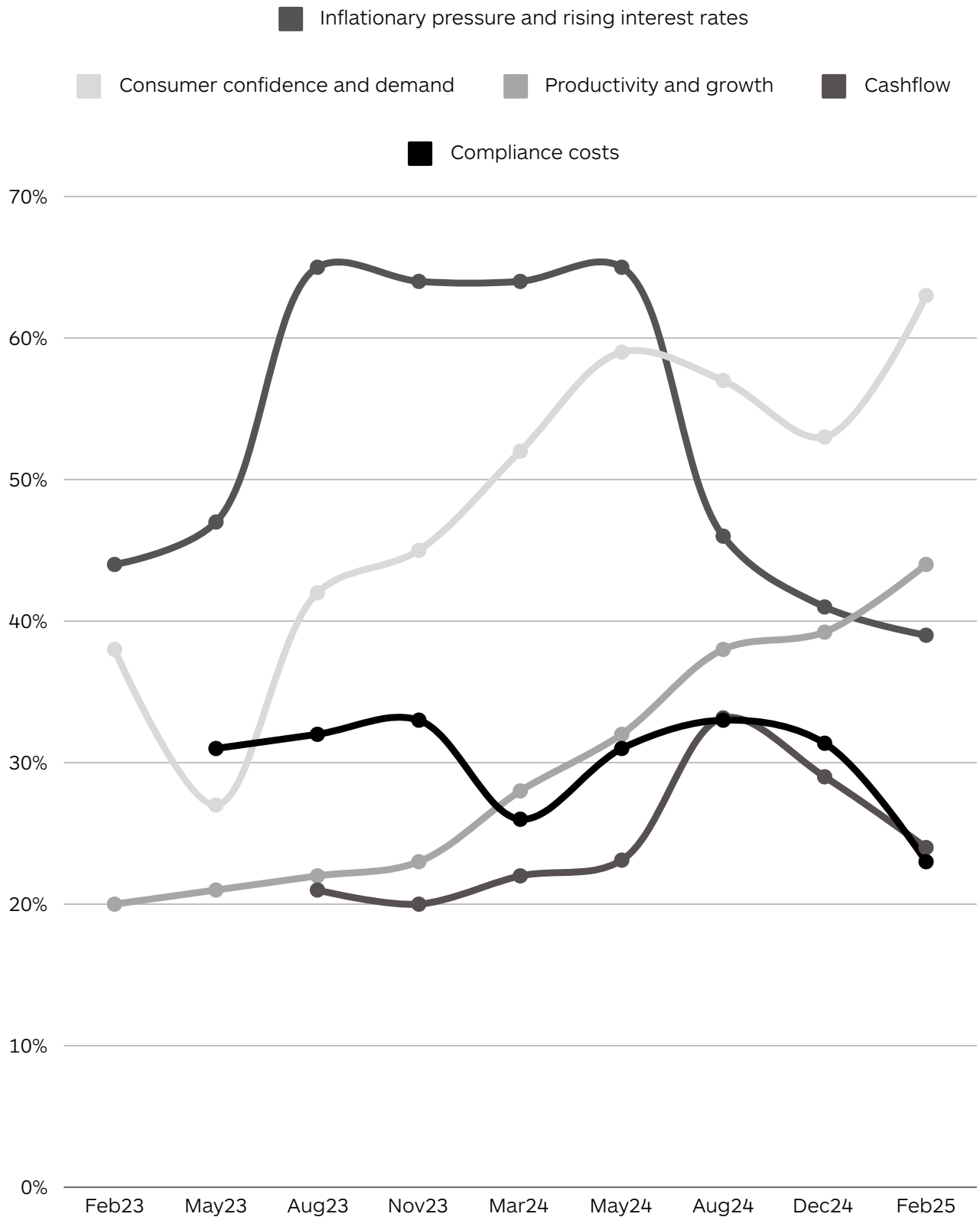
Business confidence: net positivity scores

To calculate a net positivity score, we subtract the percentage of negative responses from the percentage of positive responses. A higher net positivity score indicates a more positive overall sentiment, while a lower score suggests a more negative sentiment.



Top issues

In every survey, we ask respondents to select the three biggest concerns for them. The graph below shows the proportion of respondents who listed one of the following four issues among their top three concerns.



Canterbury Businesses Vision for the Region

In this survey, we asked local businesses, "What is your vision or ambition for the Canterbury economy, and what challenges might be standing in our way?" Here's what they had to say:

Canterbury businesses reported envision a thriving, innovative economy that positions the region as a premier business destination in New Zealand.

Survey responses reveal optimism about Canterbury's potential, with calls for better infrastructure, reduced bureaucracy, and more business-friendly policies to overcome current challenges.

Local business leaders want Canterbury to "bat above its weight" and become a hub for innovation, manufacturing, and technology, with many seeing potential for the region to rival Auckland as New Zealand's commercial centre.

The vision: Respondents consistently described aspirations for Canterbury to become a diverse, sustainable economy that attracts talent and investment.

- Many specifically mentioned developing a "Silicon Valley" of New Zealand, with strong technology and innovation sectors.

Key challenges: Excessive bureaucracy, infrastructure limitations, and council policies were frequently cited as barriers to economic growth.

- Business owners expressed frustration with "regulatory constraints," "council red tape," and "poor decision making" at local government levels.

Infrastructure needs: Improved transportation networks, including better roads and public transport options, emerged as critical requirements for regional growth.

- Several respondents highlighted the importance of "investing ahead of demand" in infrastructure to support business expansion.

Talent concerns: Retaining skilled workers in Canterbury was identified as a significant challenge, with many noting a "brain drain" of young professionals leaving for higher salaries overseas.

The bottom line: Canterbury businesses see tremendous potential for regional growth but believe realising this vision requires more collaborative approaches between business, council, and government to create a more business-friendly environment.