



2024
Queensland
State Election
Business Blueprint



**Business
Chamber**
QUEENSLAND

About Business Chamber Queensland

Business Chamber Queensland is the leading body for business in Queensland. We are the voice of business in Queensland and represent businesses of every size, industry, and region of the state. We represent the interests of more than 480,00 Queensland businesses to all levels of government.

With a 155-year history, we are an independent, not-for-profit organisation committed to putting Queensland businesses first.

We provide practical support, innovative thinking, and powerful advocacy to help businesses seize opportunities now and in the future.

We have decades of unparalleled Queensland business sentiment, conditions and expectation data and business engagement insight – directly reflecting the voice of Queensland businesses. This data and insight alongside an independent business election priorities survey formed this blueprint.

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Executive Summary

In Queensland, we are on the cusp of significant opportunities, and it's critical the state's businesses are supported to be competitive now and thrive into the future.

That's why, in the lead-up to the upcoming State Election, we are actively advocating for a strong commitment to business and long-term policy planning to set our state up for economic success.

Business Chamber Queensland has listened to the voices of thousands of businesses across our state to understand their needs and develop the 2024 State Election Business Blueprint.

We speak with the business community every day. We have a 155-year legacy of leading the business agenda in Queensland, decades of unparalleled Queensland business sentiment, conditions and expectation data and rich business insight directly reflecting the voice of Queensland businesses. We have been advocating for business policies for decades.

We've combined all this with the election priorities businesses shared with us through our surveys, consultations and research, to develop this comprehensive leading business blueprint for the 2024 State Election.

“We have heard from the business community there is enormous opportunity ahead, but significant headwinds are also being experienced every day, and the business community is concerned about a lack of long-term planning to secure our state's economic success.”

Our 2024 State Election Business Blueprint is leading the economic debate and business agenda for the 2024 State Election. It sets out key business challenges and opportunities and provides actionable recommendations for positive business policy for the next Queensland Government.

Importantly, we have developed business-leading recommendations that outline a strategic plan to position Queensland as the leading state for business in Australia and secure our ability to compete on the world stage. These recommendations are across:

1. Business friendly government
2. Enhancing productivity
3. Growing workforces
4. Sustainability and energy
5. Local and global business
6. Thriving communities



Executive Summary



The recommendations in this Business Blueprint are constructive solutions designed to improve the business environment in Queensland and strengthen the partnership between the government and the business sector.

The 2024 State Election is a golden opportunity for genuine business policy reform. It is critical policymakers and all parts of government actively reduce restraints and barriers to business and support businesses' access to, and participation in, future economic opportunities.

By addressing the major concerns of Queensland's business community and setting a long term policy direction, the next Queensland Government can foster a business landscape that is not only the strongest in Australia but also highly competitive globally.

The challenge - and opportunity - for the next State Government is to deliver policies and outcomes that stimulate economic growth and enable the private sector.

A thriving business environment benefits us all and will create better jobs, stronger communities and encourage Queensland businesses to invest and employ, ultimately strengthening the economy.

It is essential the voice of business is heard. The next Queensland Government must prioritise the economic development of our state, so businesses can continue to be the lifeblood of the economy and the heart of our communities.

“Together, we can make Queensland the best place to do business in Australia, with a vibrant, competitive economy on the global stage.”



What business told us: Business sentiment



We listen to the experiences and needs of business across Queensland

Queensland businesses have shared their experiences and critical business needs. Our consistent and timely reporting of issues affecting Queensland businesses ensures regular and comprehensive research and consultation is undertaken to drive policy decisions across all parts of government.

Thousands of businesses, local chambers and industry leaders participated in our business election priorities research including responding to our election survey, engaging in our consultations across the state and providing input to our topic specific surveys over recent months.



What business told us:

The current Queensland business environment

We have decades of unparalleled business sentiment, conditions and expectations data. Our Pulse data, which has been ongoing for 30 years, is considered among the most comprehensive, trusted and established source of business insight.

It's combined with our extensive research and data collected through our Future of Work and Digital Future of Work Reports, Advancing Business Sustainability, Efficient Regulation, and research into insurance accessibility and affordability, disaster recovery and Queensland Beyond 2032.

This data and research shows businesses are facing a series of micro and macro economic challenges, some at record levels.

We're seeing the longest sustained period of low business confidence in the past 30 years.

While confidence and conditions were weaker during the beginning of the GFC and the peak of COVID, both recovered faster than the current trend.¹ Businesses are facing record high operating and labour costs, a restrictive regulatory and workforce environment, a tight labour market and weak consumer spend.

Prevailing day-to-day business pressures compound on equally persistent

macroeconomic challenges to create a tough business environment in Queensland.

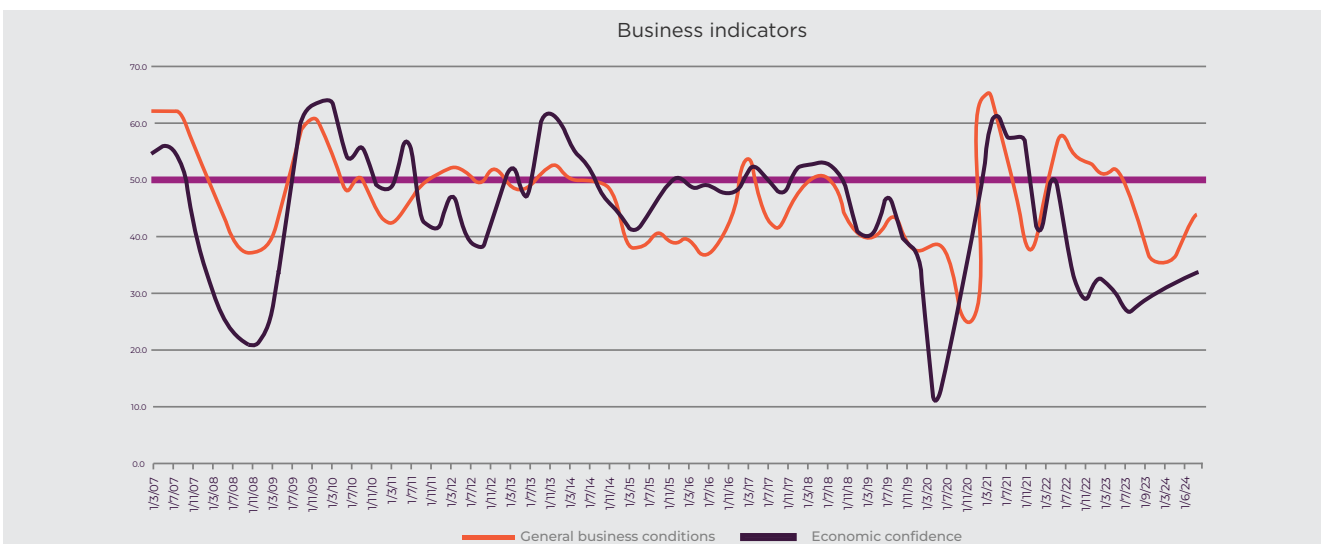
The result is businesses are working harder and not seeing the productivity or profitability gains to match.

The 2024 State Election is the chance to set the standard for meaningful policy reform, to enable businesses relief from compounding pressures and opportunities to participate in and benefit from economic investment.

Queensland businesses are in a unique position of forward economic opportunities, with the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, increased global demand for Queensland-made goods, the energy transition and the Big Build presenting significant opportunity for private sector involvement and benefit.

Businesses see major public investment like the Big Build as a business opportunity for a proportion of the work to come from local businesses.

These investments are also opportunity for meaningful policy reform, to allow businesses to participate and benefit in the wider domestic and global economy in the immediate and long term.



What business told us:

Business Election Survey

In our recent Business Election Survey, we heard directly from more than **800 businesses** who told us their priority issues. We put **75 essential business topics** to businesses across the state and asked them to measure their level of concern or sentiment. These topics covered these areas:

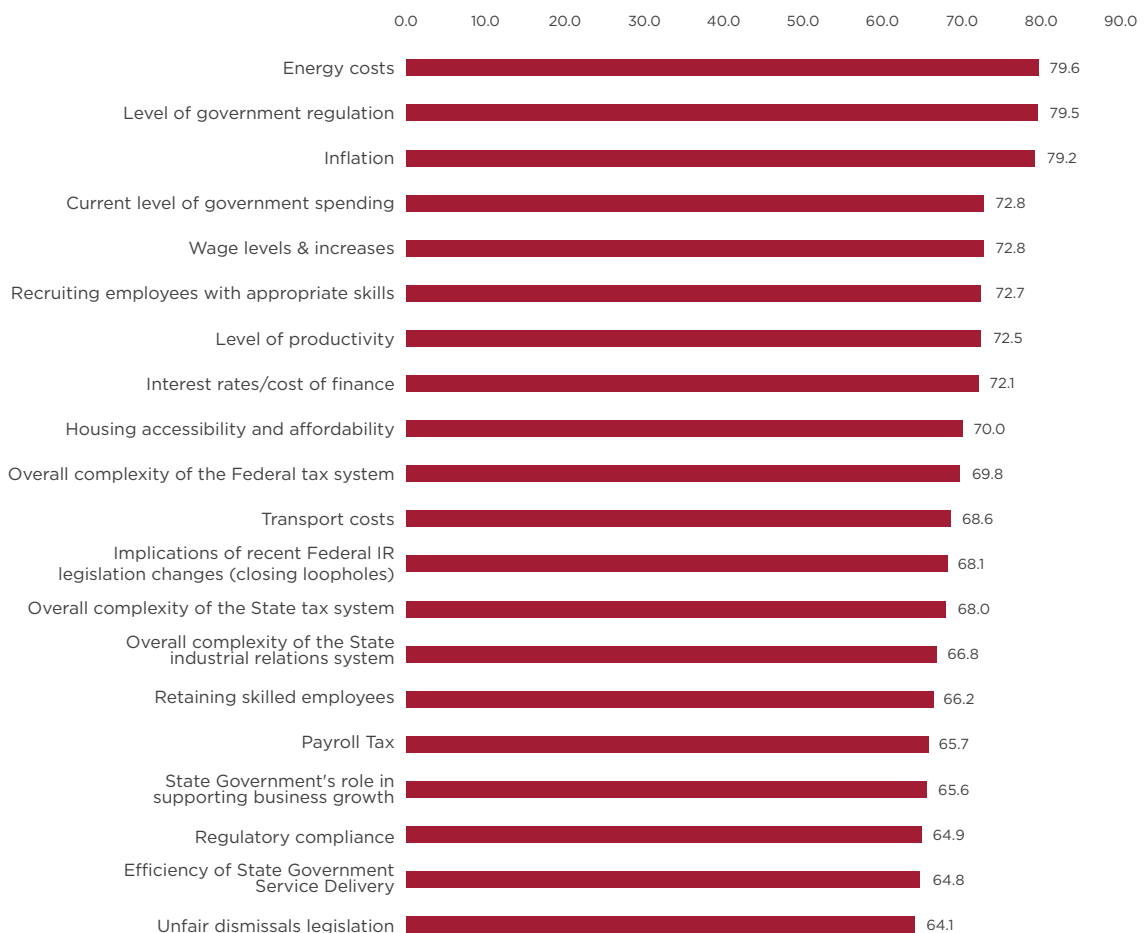
- Economy
- Taxation
- Workplace relations
- Workplace health and safety
- Skills development
- Education and training
- Working with the state government
- Infrastructure
- Environment and sustainability

Businesses ranked these issues on a scale of zero to 100. An index of more than 65 represents a critical business concern.

The top 20 issues businesses identified were ranked very closely, with 17 issues representing a critical concern for Queensland businesses.

We also tested business sentiment on a range of topics with the data on the following pages representing the challenges and opportunities for Queensland business.

Ranking of concerns by issue
(where an index score of 0 is no concern and 100 is critical concern)



Source: Business Chamber Queensland Business Election Survey, July 2024

The challenges

Lack of long term economic policy planning

95.4% of respondents are not satisfied with the level of **government support**

Only **6%** of respondents say the Queensland Government is planning for their businesses' **long-term economic future**

Only **5.3%** of businesses say Queensland's current economic policies support their **business growth**

Macroeconomic issues

80.7% have major or critical concern about **inflation**

64.4% of businesses have major or critical concern about **interest rates** and the cost of finance

60.1% have a major or critical concern about the overall complexity of the **state tax system and payroll tax** specifically

Regulatory burden

77.3% are concerned about the level of **government regulation**

55.8% of businesses have major or critical concern about **regulatory compliance**

Procurement barriers

Only **4%** agree it's easy to **procure to government**

Weak productivity

74.5% agree current workplace relations system is not flexible

67.5% have major or critical concern about level of **productivity** in the Queensland economy

Difficulties in employing apprentices

60.9% strongly agree the current state of the Queensland economy is reducing their business's capacity to employ **new apprentices and trainees**

Lack of infrastructure investment

45.6% have major or critical concern about **telecommunication infrastructure**

43.2% of respondents have major concern about access to adequate **transport infrastructure**

Lack of housing availability

63.2% of businesses have major or critical concern about **housing accessibility and affordability** which limits their ability to employ staff

Escalating operating costs

77.2% of businesses are concerned about **energy costs**

62.7% have major or critical concern about **transport costs**

Workforce constraints

67.3% of businesses have major concern about **recruiting employees** with appropriate skills

Source: Business Chamber Queensland Business Election Survey, July 2024

The opportunities

State-wide benefit from the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

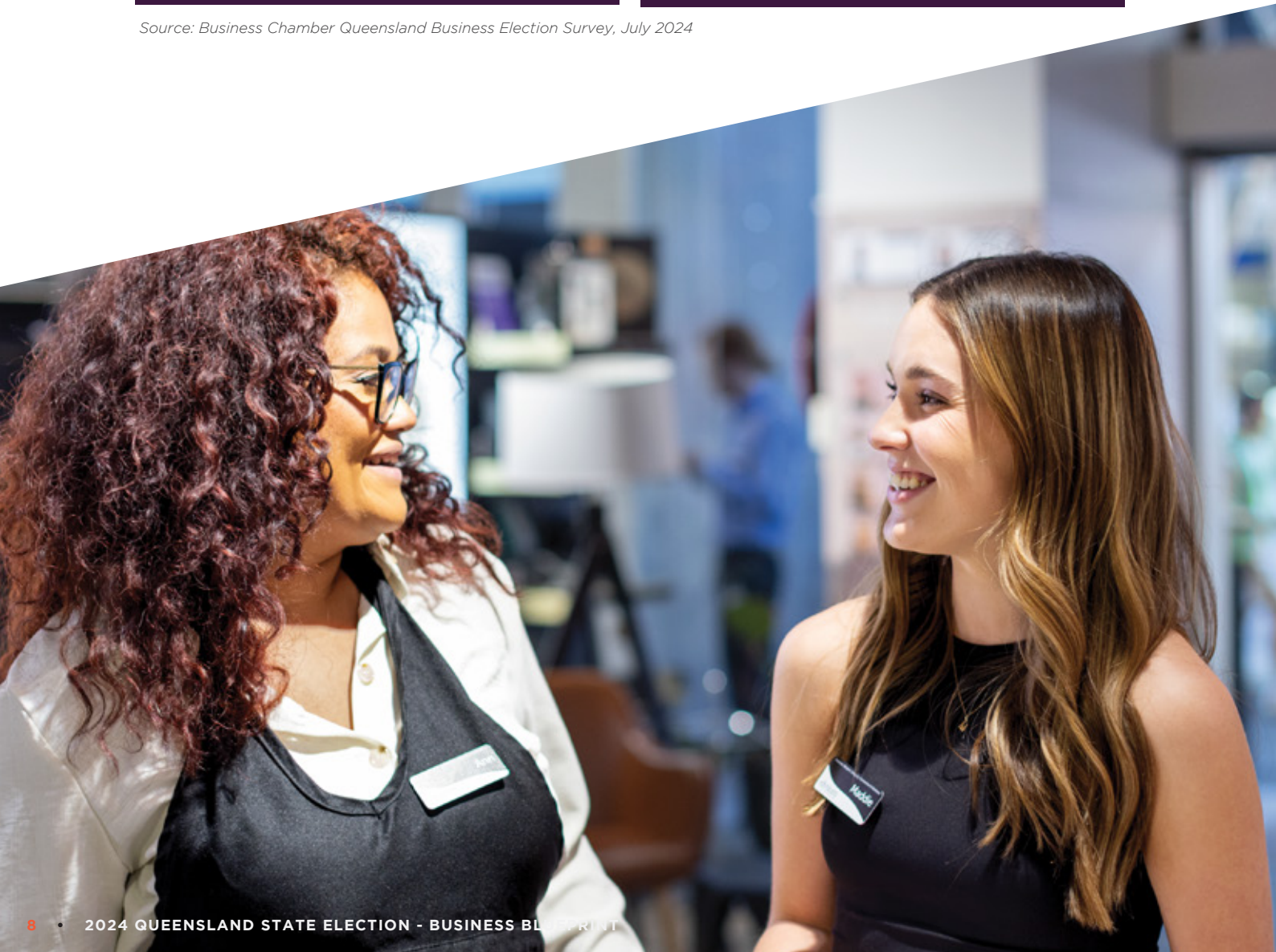
77.1% of respondents agree it is **important the regions benefit** from the Olympics

Only **18.3%** say they are confident their business can benefit from the **Olympics**

Infrastructure spend

86.8% of respondents agree or strongly agree the State Government's **Big Build infrastructure plan** should commit to ensuring a proportion of work supplied should come from local Queensland businesses

Source: Business Chamber Queensland Business Election Survey, July 2024



What business told us:

State-wide consultation

We spoke to business across the state who told us they faced compounding local and state-wide pressures every day, many of which were shared among regions, communities and local economies.

These conversations reflected what we saw in the survey data, as well as highlighted unique local challenges. **Crime, anti-social behaviour, housing and homelessness as well as restrictive workforce, high business costs, and inefficient government regulations** were consistently raised in our business engagements.

Businesses told us they want to participate in future economic opportunities, but they want to see a solid policy strategy for business with clarity about how they can contribute and benefit.

These conversations reinforced the data and confirmed business concerns and issues are consistent across our state. This underscores the need for more effective long-term government policy that can address these challenges with a tailored approach that meets both statewide and local needs – overall supporting thriving businesses and local communities.

“Energy prices are unsustainable, government red tape is strangling business, wage costs are already unsustainable let alone if you add Payroll Tax.” - Small accommodation and hospitality business in Brisbane.





Business Blueprint

Business Blueprint Overview

These recommendations have been developed in consultation with the business community and are designed to foster a more conducive environment for business growth and economic development in Queensland.

By implementing these strategies, the next State Government can improve operating environments, reduce regulatory burden,

support local opportunities, and ensure a balanced, sustainable future for the business community in Queensland.

These measures are essential for maintaining competitiveness, fostering innovation, and promoting overall economic resilience in Queensland.

 <p>Business friendly government</p>	 <p>Enhancing productivity</p>	 <p>Growing workforces</p>
<p>Removing barriers to business and improving the business operating environment in Queensland must be a critical priority for the next Queensland Government by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing to long term integrated economic policy planning • Providing operating cost relief • Reducing regulatory burden • Reform taxation • Reducing payment timeframes and improve on-time payments 	<p>Empowering businesses with the tools and environment they need to be productive and innovative long-term by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing digital support and enhancing connectivity • Reducing workforce constraints • Fostering innovation • Increasing government efficiency 	<p>Future-proofing and growing workforces through industry-ready models by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving training quality and accessibility • Funding and enabling skills development • Increasing workforce mobility
 <p>Sustainability and energy</p>	 <p>Local and global business</p>	 <p>Thriving communities</p>
<p>Leading business sustainability with a focus on resilience, efficiency and long-term economy-wide benefits by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving environmental regulation • Streamlining environmental management • Increasing energy efficiency and diversity • Building business resilience 	<p>Fostering business connection, access and partnerships with supply chains and markets at the local and global level by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving procurement capability • Increasing supply chain readiness • Enabling Olympics readiness and legacy • Stimulating global competitiveness for local businesses 	<p>Empowering Queensland's geographically and economically dispersed communities through equal investment and equal reform of shared and regional and metro community challenges by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning housing and economic policy • Reforming insurance affordability and accessibility • Providing crime and community safety solutions for business • Committing to business-enabling infrastructure • Supporting mental health and wellbeing initiatives



2024 QUEENSLAND STATE ELECTION

01

Business-friendly government

01

Business-friendly government

Removing barriers to business and improving the business operating environment.



1(a) Long term integrated policy planning

Creating a supportive business environment through long-term integrated policy planning is critical for attracting investment, fostering innovation, and driving economic growth. The next Queensland Government must focus on providing long-term planning certainty, and developing policies that support a thriving business community.

Only **6%** of respondents say the Queensland Government is planning for their businesses' long-term economic future

95.4% of respondents are not satisfied with the level of government support

Only **5.3%** of businesses say Queensland's current economic policies support their business growth

"There is a lack of understanding by government of what our industry involves - really!" - Large mining business in Central Queensland.



Recommendation

Commit to long-term economic planning that gives businesses the certainty they need to invest and grow. This includes stable tax policies, consistent regulatory frameworks, and clear infrastructure development plans.

1(b) Operating cost relief

Businesses are experiencing record high operating costs.² The same cost of living issues that are being experienced in the community are also being experienced by businesses. The issue of escalating operating and wages costs has been consistently represented in our engagements with the business community across the state. Investment in immediate insurance bill relief will help secure adequate insurance; an essential component of business resilience. Our 2023 Business Insurance Report found 12% of Queensland businesses were underinsured with that figure reaching 19% in North Queensland.³ Businesses tell us insurance premiums are the second highest operating cost constraint behind workforce costs, even higher than escalating fuel and energy costs.

77.2% of businesses are concerned about energy costs

71.7% have a major or critical concern about wage levels and increases

46.5% are concerned about telecommunications infrastructure

62.7% of businesses have major concern about transport costs

"Everything is harder and more expensive, and there is no incentive to be remote from Brisbane" - Small construction business in North Queensland.



Recommendations

- Remove stamp duty on insurance premiums.
- Invest in reinsurance pools as an insurance of last resort.
- Extend the Resilient Homes Fund program to include commercial properties leveraging its proven return on investment and ensuring businesses can get back to work sooner after a disaster.
- Extend and increase the Electricity Bill Relief to small businesses beyond 2024 offering tangible and immediate relief from one of the most significant operational expenses, enabling businesses to allocate resources strategically.
- Support for businesses in the just transition to a low carbon economy future.
- Collaborate with insurance providers to develop affordable insurance coverage options.

² Business Chamber Queensland Pulse Report June 2024

³ Business Chamber Queensland Business Insurance Survey 2023

01

Business-friendly government

Removing barriers to business and improving the business operating environment.



1(c) Regulatory burden

Businesses in every industry, every size and in every part of the state say inefficient regulation stifles business growth, innovation, and competitiveness. The median cost of complying with inefficient government regulation doubled in two years to \$50,000⁴. Businesses are on average employing a full time employee to manage regulation.

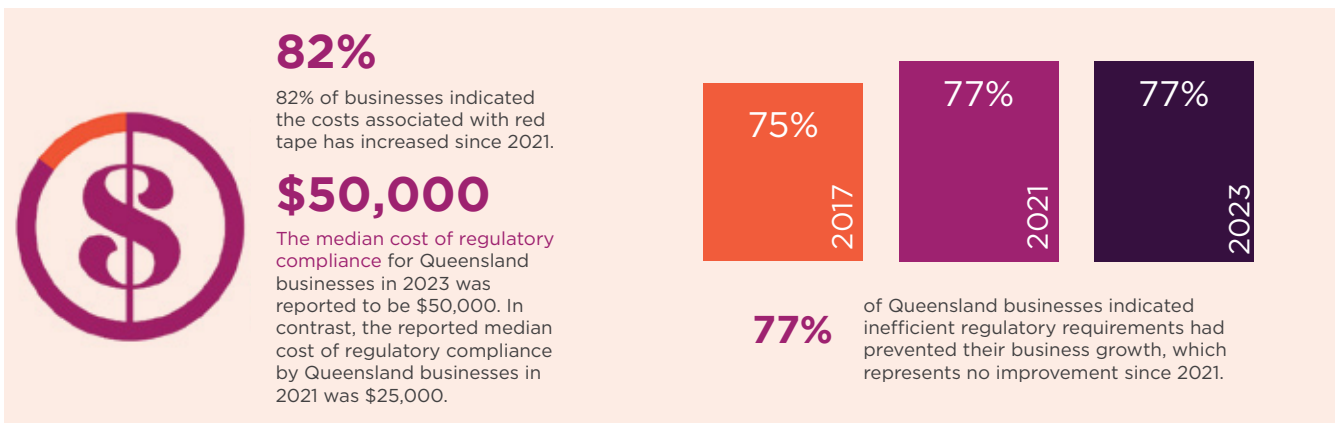
It is essential to reduce the regulatory burden and ensure regulations are streamlined, efficient, and supportive of business needs. Removing barriers to business and improving the business operating environment in Queensland must be a critical priority for the next Queensland Government.

77.3% of businesses have major or critical concerns about government regulation

71.5% agree the government should support a regulatory reform review, facilitated by an independent business body

55.8% of businesses are concerned about regulatory compliance

Only **4%** of businesses are satisfied with the government's efforts to reduce regulatory burden



Source: Business Chamber Queensland Efficient Regulation Report, November 2023

Recommendations

- Commit to a series of key measures to reduce regulatory burden to directly support Queensland businesses including:
 - Communicating and consulting with businesses when developing new regulations.
 - Engaging with industry to ensure full regulatory impact statement for each new piece of legislation.
 - Reducing regulation duplication between levels of government and across state departments.
 - Reducing the frequency of reporting requirements to a minimum.
 - Reducing the amount of information requested to a minimum.
 - Providing a single location for all regulatory information and announcements.
 - Committing to one central economic agency which drives regulatory reform.
 - Implementing pre-populated forms and reports and establish reliable electronic and web-based reporting.
 - Amending regulation release so businesses are able to prepare and be compliant.
- Partner with Business Chamber Queensland to provide an independent business regulation report and comprehensive review of existing regulations to identify and eliminate inefficient regulation that hinders business operations.
- Commit to meaningful change and hold each Director General accountable for regulation reform in each department.

⁴ Business Chamber Queensland Efficient Regulation Report, 2023

01

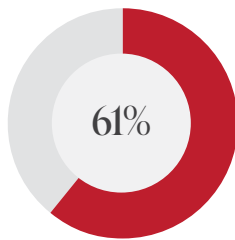
Business-friendly government

Removing barriers to business and improving the business operating environment.

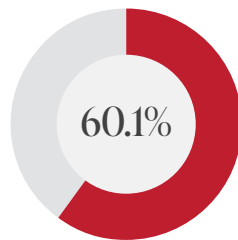


1(d) Taxation reform

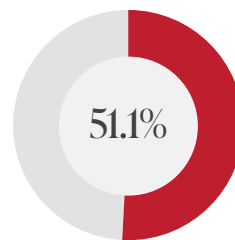
A competitive tax system is essential for Queensland to attract and retain businesses, especially in an increasingly globalised economy. The current tax framework must be reformed to reduce the burden on businesses and improve Queensland's attractiveness as a business destination.



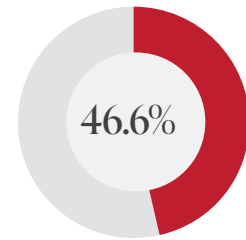
of businesses are concerned about payroll tax



are concerned about overall complexity of the state tax system



of businesses have major concerns about stamp duty



of businesses are concerned about land tax

Recommendations

- Use national cabinet as a forum for broader payroll tax reform to simplify and phase out payroll tax.
- In the interim, increase the payroll tax threshold to reflect wage growth to prevent it from becoming a barrier to employment growth, taking into account accelerating wage costs.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of stamp duties on insurance, property transfers, and vehicle registration. Adjust these duties to improve business profitability.
- Address the rising burden of land tax on small businesses by capping increases and implementing phased assessments. Introduce exemptions for businesses that significantly contribute to the local economy.

1(e) On time payments

Cash is king for any business, but especially small business. When payments are not made on time, it can dramatically impact cashflow. Timely payments are essential for businesses to meet their financial obligations, avoid debt, and maintain operations smoothly.

Recommendations

- Reduce government payment times to five business days to support business cash flow and financial stability.
- Extend the On-Time Payment Policy to include all businesses and introduce penalty interest on unpaid invoices to all businesses; penalty interest on unpaid invoices must be applied to all eligible businesses, increasing the scope of the Queensland Government's On-Time Payment Policy to include businesses of all sizes.

02

Enhancing productivity



02

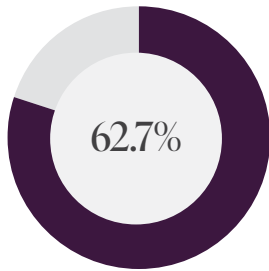
Enhancing productivity

Empowering businesses with the tools and environment they need to be productive and innovative long-term.

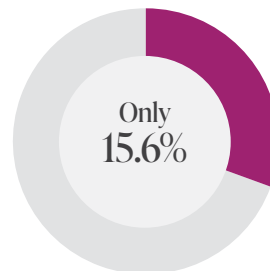


2(a) Digital and connectivity

Digitisation fuels business growth in Queensland, yet digital connectivity is inadequate. Regional businesses struggle due to limited high-speed internet access, hindering their participation in broader markets. Support programs are necessary to enhance businesses' digital capabilities. Without this, Queensland risks lagging in the digital economy. Addressing these issues through comprehensive strategies is imperative for fostering economic resilience and ensuring equitable participation in the digital age.



of businesses say the State Government should invest more in supporting businesses in the digital transformation



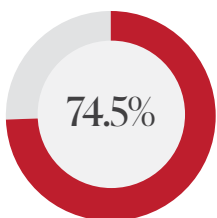
of businesses say they are satisfied with the level of digital connectivity and digital infrastructure in Queensland

Recommendations

- Invest in high-speed internet and digital infrastructure across the state, focusing on regional areas with inadequate digital connectivity, to improve connectivity and enhance digital opportunities.
- Work with industry experts to prioritise relevant and work-ready programs in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and digital strategy to support businesses in developing digital skills.
- Partner with Business Chamber Queensland to establish a Digital Centre of Excellence to lead the state in digital innovation and skills development.

2(b) Workforce constraints

Businesses need assistance in navigating and managing an increasingly complex regulatory and legislative environment, particularly in relation to Human Resources (HR) and Industrial Relations (IR) laws. When many businesses, particularly small and medium, are already struggling with weak business conditions and the significant time and financial costs to comply with existing regulations, support to manage workforces is critical. It is essential Queensland business needs are at the forefront of any legislative and regulatory changes that may impact their day-to-day operations and potentially harm productivity through growing costs and complexities.



of businesses agree the current workplace relations system is not flexible and the State Government should work with the Federal Government to ensure productivity and flexibility are given priority to ensure Queensland businesses can thrive.



“Overwhelming IR regulations placing overwhelming, unfair and non-preventive risks upon employers” - Small information, media and telecommunications business in North Queensland



“Employment laws make it difficult to employ people in a flexible win-win way” - Small education and training business in North Queensland

Recommendations

- Establish a dedicated Queensland-Federal Government Industry Consultation Taskforce to enhance collaboration and mitigate the impact of industrial relations reforms on local employers.
- Remove regulatory duplication between State and Federal IR laws to reduce complexity and overlap.
- Invest in direct support methods to ensure Queensland businesses are able to understand and manage changing HR and IR laws. Business Chamber Queensland is best placed to offer this HR and IR support, in a similar method to other information and advisory services.

02

Enhancing productivity

Empowering businesses with the tools and environment they need to be productive and innovative long-term.



2(c) Fostering innovation

Business tells us they are working harder than ever but not seeing the productivity outcomes to match. High costs, restrictive workforce and regulatory environments, weak consumer confidence and weak profitability compound to put pressure on productivity. Overall it's taking businesses more to do less. More than two-thirds of respondents to our Business Election Survey told us they're concerned about economic productivity. Productive businesses that are supported and incentivised to innovate will position Queensland as a global leader in key industries and be sustainable, competitive and viable long-term.

Only **5.3%** of businesses agree current economic policies in Queensland are supportive of their growth

Only **4.6%** of businesses are satisfied with the level of government support provided to Queensland businesses

60.4% of businesses have major or critical concerns about the State Government's role in supporting business growth

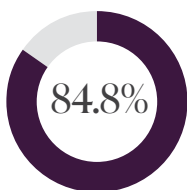
67.5% of businesses have major or critical concerns about the level of economic productivity in Queensland

Recommendations

- Establish or expand innovation hubs across Queensland, focusing on key sectors where the state can become a global leader.
- Develop economic policies that actively support business growth, such as grants for innovation, subsidies for workforce training, and incentives for expanding into new markets.
- Ensure monitoring and evaluation to measure impact and effectiveness of policies on business success.

2(d) Government efficiency

The next State Government must prioritise government efficiency. Streamlining bureaucratic processes and adopting digital transformation initiatives are critical steps in reducing the administrative burden on businesses and fostering a more agile, business-friendly environment to enhance productivity.



84.8% of businesses agree there is room for improvement in State Government service delivery efficiency and effectiveness.



“Government fees, charges, and other costs incurred to meet regulatory and reporting requirements are creating significant pressure on businesses.” - Large manufacturing business on the Sunshine Coast

Recommendations

- Partner with Business Chamber Queensland to initiate a program that enhances government's understanding of business needs, improving the quality of engagement between the public and private sectors and fostering a more supportive business environment.
- Accelerate the digitalisation of government services, making it easier for businesses to interact with the government.
- Implement a program of digital transformation to streamline government processes.

03

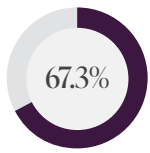
Growing workforces



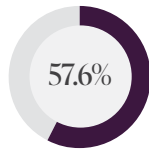


3(a) Training quality and accessibility

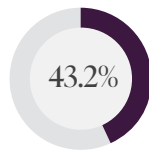
Workforce challenges, including attracting and retaining skilled staff, direct and indirect wage costs and managing a complex and changing regulatory environment have been the most significant constraints on business growth for more than two years. Workforce challenges are the most wide-spread, consistent and impactful issues businesses raise with us⁵. It is critical to prioritise relevant and work ready programs to deliver a mix of targeted training programs that meet specific business, region and market needs. Improving training quality and accessibility can unlock future ready workforces.



67.3%
of businesses have major or critical concerns about recruiting employees with appropriate skills



57.6%
are concerned about retaining skilled employees



43.2%
are concerned about upskilling current employees

“We attract lots of casual backpackers who don't stay and we need full-time skilled staff or a pathway to retain backpackers for two to three years. You train them and then they have to leave. Costs of working are higher in regional areas but not recognized by government or customers.” - Small real estate and rental business in North Queensland.



Recommendation

- Partner with industry leaders to develop and deliver a mix of targeted training programs that meet specific business, region and market needs, remove barriers to vocational education and training (VET), and ensure training is accessible, flexible, and aligned with industry.

3(b) Fund and enable skills development

Sustainable and future-ready workforces allows Queensland businesses to capitalise on the opportunities over the next decade and beyond. This requires investment in skills that will allow businesses to meet their ongoing and future workforce needs. A skilled and adaptable workforce is essential for Queensland's economic success. Queensland must prioritise education and skills development to remain competitive on both the local, national and global stage, ensuring businesses have access to the talent they need to thrive.

49.3% of businesses are concerned about government funding for training efficiency and effectiveness

16.9% of businesses say they have the skilled and trained workforce to meet their business needs

47.6% have major or critical concerns about financial support for on the job skills development and training

Recommendations

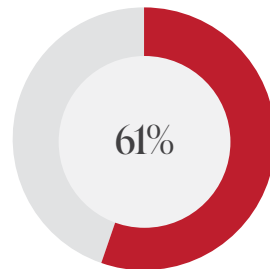
- Increase support for apprenticeships and traineeships, particularly in sectors facing skills shortages, including financial incentives for businesses to hire and train apprentices, and streamlined processes for recognising overseas qualifications.
- Provide funding support for partnerships between industry and educational institutions to ensure training programs are relevant and effective, creating a pipeline of skilled workers.



3(c) Workforce mobility

The Queensland Government should improve workforce mobility, address skills mismatches, and enhance relocation and upskilling programs to meet industry needs. Increased regional investment by the state government has the potential to stimulate local economies, creating more opportunities for workers and businesses. However, regional communities often struggle to find the right skills and fill local positions, which limits their ability to fully capitalise on growth opportunities.

Recruitment initiatives should focus on attracting and retaining skilled workers by offering incentives for businesses to promote continuous learning, development, and upskilling, particularly in high-demand sectors. Ongoing funding of programs like Workforce Evolve is critical for supporting workforce growth and resilience.



of businesses have major or critical concerns about implications of recent industrial relations reforms

Recommendations

- Facilitate geographic mobility, address skills mismatch and enhance existing relocation and upskilling programs.
- Enhance recruitment initiatives to attract and retain skilled workers in Queensland by providing incentives for businesses that promote continuous learning, development, and upskilling for employees, particularly in high-demand sectors.
- Commit to ongoing funding of the Workforce Evolve program.



04

Sustainability and energy



4(a) Environmental regulation

Businesses are increasing efficiencies and reducing business input costs, meeting evolving supply chain and global consumer expectations for sustainably produced goods and services, increasingly required to win work in the private sector and procure to government while attracting and retaining a workforce that shares their sustainable business values. Queensland businesses are making sustainability decisions beyond minimum standards, but more than half are missing out on efficiency benefits from working sustainably.⁶ Simplifying environmental regulation and streamlining environmental approval processes is critical to enabling businesses to realise sustainable business benefits.

34.5% of businesses have major or critical **concern** about **environmental** and sustainability regulation

36.5% are **concerned** about **environmental fees and licenses**

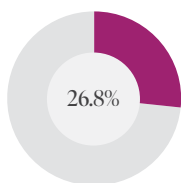
22.7% businesses have major or critical **concern** for meeting wider market and sustainability expectations, for example, **from export markets, supplies and customers**

Recommendations

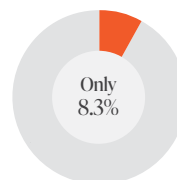
- Commit to building broad industry and stakeholder consensus to secure a social license to enable businesses to better support the regulatory environment and understand their role in environmental management.
- Simplify environmental regulations to reduce business compliance costs while maintaining high environmental standards.
- Streamline environmental approval processes and eliminate redundant requirements that add unnecessary burden without corresponding environmental benefits.
- Remove duplication between state and territory environmental regulation and approval processes.

4(b) Environmental management

More than a quarter of businesses are concerned about access to support to address physical and transitional impacts from climate change. We know businesses need support to manage upcoming mandatory reporting and changes in supply chain requirements. Continuing the positive 10 year legacy in delivering the ecoBiz program in partnership with the State Government, Business Chamber Queensland is best placed to deliver this support to Queensland businesses.



of businesses are concerned about access to support to address physical and transitional impacts from climate change



of businesses only agree or strongly agree the level of support and resources for businesses to adopt sustainable practices in Queensland is sufficient

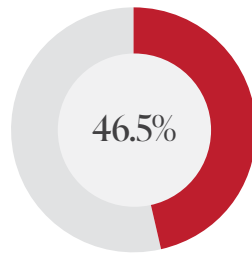
Recommendations

- Continue supporting ecoBiz to enhance ESG maturity in businesses, aligning them with upcoming mandatory reporting and future supply chain requirements, ensuring consistency and long-term sustainability and compliance outcomes.
- Encourage government and private sector collaboration to drive sustainability initiatives, including co-funding projects that promote environmental stewardship and developing programs that support businesses in achieving sustainability goals.
- Commit to ongoing funding of the ecoBiz program.



4(c) Energy efficiency and diversity

Energy costs are among the most significant contributors to record high business input costs. An investment in low-cost, renewable energy resources can provide a long-term sustainable method to put downward pressure on day-to-day energy costs and support businesses to manage energy costs long-term. Renewable energy resources can also enable on-going energy supply during times of supply disruption for example natural disasters.



of businesses have major or critical concern about access to adequate energy infrastructure

Recommendations

- Invest in low-cost, renewable energy sources to restore Queensland's comparative energy advantage
- Funding research and development in clean energy technologies and infrastructure projects that increase energy efficiency and diversity.

4(d) Resilient businesses

Business resilience encompasses more than just financial security and disaster preparedness but extends to sustainable enterprises capable of adaptation and growth, particularly in their capacity to engage in modern supply chains, demonstrating their ability to report on mandatory reporting requirements. Embracing sustainable practices not only fortifies businesses but also benefits the broader community, enabling agility in the face of unforeseeable events and proactive adaptation to global market shifts. Supporting business sustainability in Queensland, with a focus on resilience, efficiency and long-term economy-wide benefits, will allow business to be competitive and viable in the immediate and long-term.

Recommendations

- Partner with Business Chamber Queensland to create a holistic Business Resilience ESG framework and supporting business capability program.
- Provide grants for small and medium businesses to access accountancy and business management software, with additional funding for training to optimise software usage.



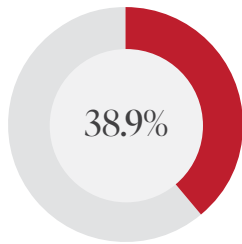
05

Local and global business



5(a) Procurement opportunities

Positioning Queensland as an attractive destination for global business investment will secure our place on the world stage and enable local businesses to partner, innovate and grow. This is critical as Brisbane and the state prepares to host the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and we see growth in population, infrastructure spend and the energy transition. Local businesses must be supported to participate in and benefit from the growth ahead in our state.



of businesses have major or critical concerns about accessing government procurement and tenders



of businesses agree it is easy to procure to government

Recommendations

- Establish a Cabinet taskforce to manage long-term cross-portfolio initiatives to achieve better outcomes for procurement in Queensland.
- Break-up tenders for SMEs.
- Simplify tender processes.
- Develop a dashboard for a procurement pipeline.
- Set an ambitious target for local procurement for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Accelerate funding for procurement capability programs for SMEs.

5(b) Supply chain readiness

Partnerships play a crucial role in enabling benefits and opportunities for businesses of all sizes and in all parts of the supply chain. A collaborative approach to procurement and innovation promotes a model of mutual benefit for a wide range of businesses. Furthermore, partnerships play a vital role in efficiently delivering large-scale projects and foster innovation, driving economic growth.

Recommendations

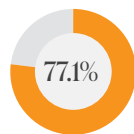
- Partner with Business Chamber Queensland to enhance supply chain readiness and build capacity within the SME community to engage in partnerships.
- Encourage successful bidders to partner with other businesses through their supply chains to tender for Games contracts and other government procurement.



5(c) Olympics readiness and legacy

For Queensland's business community, the Olympic and Paralympic Games is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine and refashion Queensland as a contemporary and competitive global player, in the lead-up to, and beyond, 2032. Infrastructure investment in the South East is one piece of the Olympics puzzle and continued investment in regional Queensland is critical to complete the Olympics economic and social legacy picture.

This considered strategy to hold Olympics events across some of the most attractive parts of the state means the Olympics can be a state-wide event, with state-wide opportunities to match. Alongside an expected influx in investment that accompanies travel, tourism and Games attendance, this will further deliver a strong legacy through an injection in employment and industry in those, and their neighbouring regions. To go alongside Games related infrastructure, there must be an equally committed focus on transport and logistics, including road and rail infrastructure.



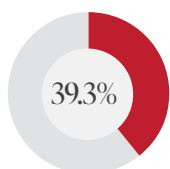
of businesses agree it is important the regions benefit from the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, but only **18.3%** think their business can benefit.

Recommendations

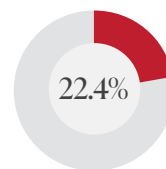
- Engage business in the planning and preparation process to ensure clarity and relevancy in building suitable infrastructure for the games.
- Finalise planning and commit to funding for 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games legacy infrastructure projects to give investment certainty.
- Accelerate priority transport connectivity projects.
- Partner with Business Chamber Queensland to build business capability and measure legacy impact.

5(d) Global competitiveness

There is growing demand for Queensland-made goods and services among global markets. Since 2020, we have seen significant export trade growth across Queensland including, in the 12 months to March 2023, an almost doubling of exports to India following the 2023 Free Trade Agreement. This came alongside a 101% increase in exports to Korea and 34% to China⁷. Local businesses must have the tools they need to access, compete and partner with these high-value and high-growth global industries and markets.



of businesses agree or strongly agree there are significant challenges related to international trade and export opportunities in Queensland.

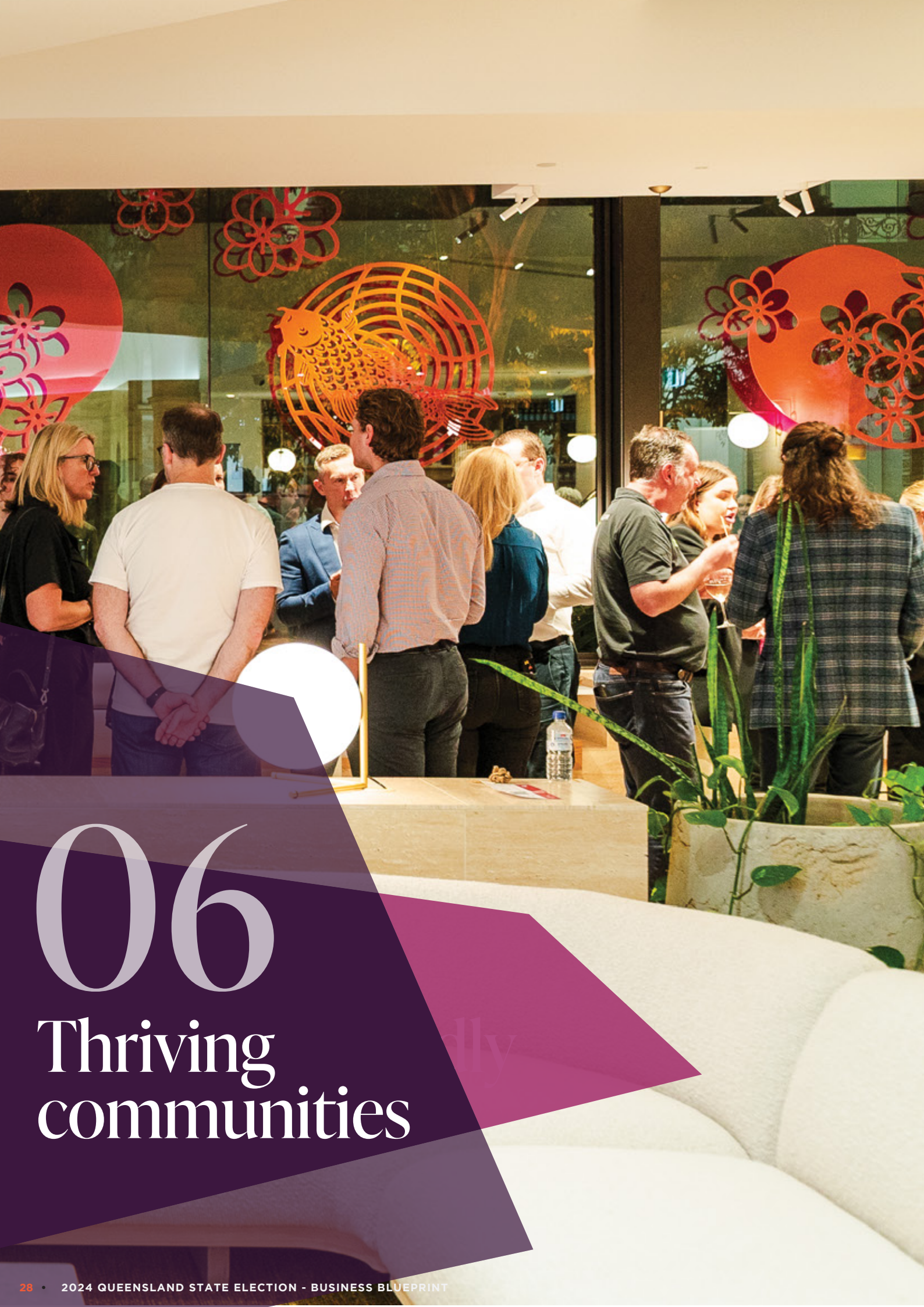


of businesses have major or critical concerns about the level of export assistance available to them.

Recommendations

- Introduce tax incentives specifically designed to attract high-growth and high-value industries such as technology, advanced manufacturing and renewable energy.
- Reward business-led research and development in these industries to attract global businesses to Queensland and encourage local businesses to innovate.
- Prioritise infrastructure projects that improve Queensland's connectivity to global markets, focusing on port expansions and digital infrastructure improvements.
- Fund targeted export grants to support businesses to scale and grow in international markets.
- Partner with Business Chamber Queensland to build export capability in SMEs and regionally.

⁷ Business Chamber Queensland Beyond 2032 Report, 2023



06

Thriving communities

06

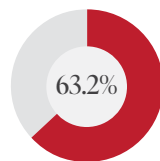
Thriving communities

Empowering Queensland's geographically disperse and economically diverse communities through equal investment and equal reform of shared regional and metro community challenges.



6(a) Housing policy

Queensland business communities are diverse but economically have shared challenges and opportunities with those across the state. What were previously considered community issues are now business and economic issues, and policy must address these challenges for both social and economic outcomes. Businesses across the state consistently tell us unaffordable and inaccessible housing is a barrier to business. Businesses cannot employ people if there is nowhere for them, or their families to live. Integrated housing policy must align social and business needs.



63.2% of businesses have major or critical concerns about housing accessibility and affordability which limits their ability to employ staff.

Recommendations

- Implement housing policies that promote affordable housing development, particularly for essential workers and growing industries and regions.
- Funding Councils to ensure streamlined planning, development and building approvals.
- Reevaluate urban planning to ensure housing policies are balanced with land supply available to meet housing demand.
- Report and publish yearly progress of the 20% target for new social and affordable housing by 2046.
- Work with industry peak bodies to achieve integrated policy outcomes.

6(b) Insurance

Poor insurance affordability and accessibility disproportionately impacts businesses in areas with higher disaster risk and high crime areas. Businesses consistently report insurance premiums as among the most significant business input costs. Our insurance data shows businesses are forced to decrease their cover due to high premiums. Additionally, where businesses are implementing adaption responses this is not yet widely recognised as a mechanism to put downward pressure on insurance premiums. Adequate insurance cover is critical to protect businesses from crisis and enable them to participate in procurement, funding and supply chain opportunities which require insurance for eligibility.



“The market failure in insurance in the North - compounded by Stamp Duty on insurance - unfairly taxing the North more as premiums are higher!” - Small not-for-profit in North Queensland.

Source: Business Chamber Queensland Business Insurance Survey 2023

Recommendations

- Further support SMEs to adapt to changes, mitigate risk and build resilience through the expansion of sustainability programs such as ecoBiz, so they can adequately identify risks and respond.
- Refer to cost mitigation strategies outlined in 1(b)

06

Thriving communities

Empowering Queensland's geographically diverse and economically diverse communities through equal investment and equal reform of shared regional and metro community challenges.



6(c) Crime and community safety

A tourism business in the North Queensland said increasing crime rates and anti-social behavior meant they had no choice but to employ security to keep their staff and premises safe. It's one example of how private businesses are forced to take accountability for societal issues, like crime and anti-social behaviour, to protect their operations and ensure their business safety. Like housing, crime and community safety is a community issue which has become a barrier to business. Crime solutions must balance community and business needs.

"High rates of crime result in poor marketability of Townsville so people don't move here, and as a result, the city stagnates and isn't growing at the rate it should." Small construction business in North Queensland.

Recommendations

- Implement measures to enhance public safety, particularly in high-crime areas that impact business operations.
- Increased police presence, address anti-social behaviour and improve lighting and surveillance in commercial and safe retail districts.
- Provide financial support for businesses who are experiencing ongoing crime and anti-social behaviour so they can manage their business operations.

6(d) Business enabling infrastructure

Regional business communities see state, national and global economic opportunities, like the renewable energy transition and the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, as the chance for local businesses to participate and benefit. Balanced business enabling infrastructure development will allow businesses across the state to participate in the Big Build and benefit from long-term legacy infrastructure. At the same time, our regional Queensland consultations highlighted shared challenges in telecommunications, transport and connectivity as barriers to business.

43.2% of businesses have major or critical concern about access to transport infrastructure.

62.7% are concerned about transport costs.

Recommendations

- Develop a business enabling infrastructure plan that addresses regional and workforce needs.
- Prioritise investment in transport networks, especially in high-traffic areas and regional zones.
- Remove open-level rail crossings in South East Queensland and invest in road and rail infrastructure for urban and regional growth and connectivity.
- Establish a High Street Renewal Fund to revitalise Queensland's high streets, particularly in regions affected by economic downturns, including providing grants for building refurbishments, public space improvements, and business support initiatives.
- Identify priority projects for telecommunications infrastructure upgrades by seeking input from industry, councils, and communities.

6(e) Mental health and wellbeing

Our data shows 90% of businesses see mental health issues as having some impact on their business now, with one in three anticipating a major or critical impact in the future.

Recommendations

- Partner with industry to develop initiatives to support the mental health and wellbeing of the business community through ongoing engagement and resources.
- Financial grants to enable businesses to implement best-practice mental health programs for employees
- Extension of existing business mental health programs to ensure increased uptake and support.



**Business
Chamber**
QUEENSLAND

We know
business matters.

Business Chamber Queensland

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