

The logo for NERA (National Energy Resources Australia) features the word "NERA" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters are filled with a horizontal gradient from purple on the left to blue on the right.

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# COVID-19 Industry Pulse Survey

MARCH 2022

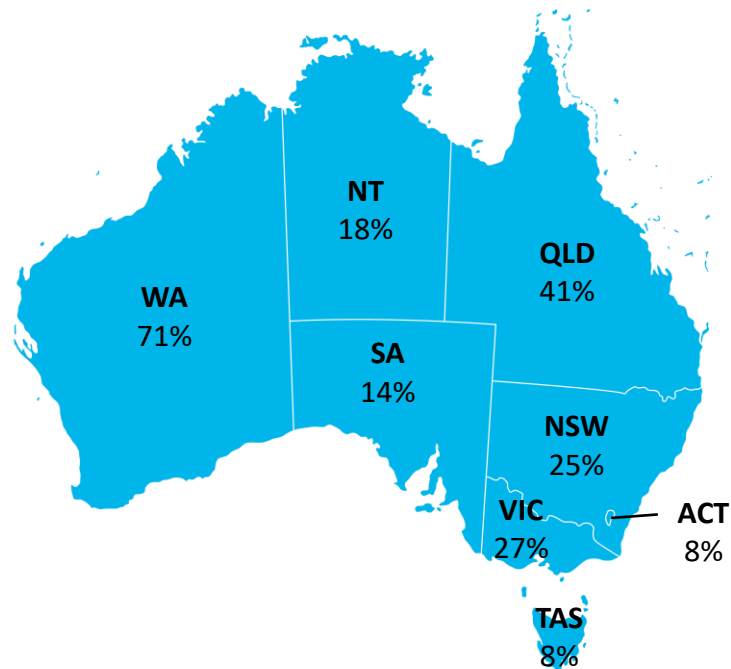
# Introduction

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- NERA reached out to business leaders from across Australia's energy sector to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic and recent Omicron wave is impacting their organisations.
- We gathered feedback through a five-minute industry pulse survey examining impacts over the past three months.
- The survey ran from 7 – 13 February 2022.
- Chief Executive Officers, Managing Directors and Senior Executives at 52 businesses completed the survey.
- This report provides a snapshot of feedback received and high-level insights.
- The survey results are reported at an overall level due to sample size limitations, though feedback was largely similar across state/territories and by organisation size. Please note that percentage figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

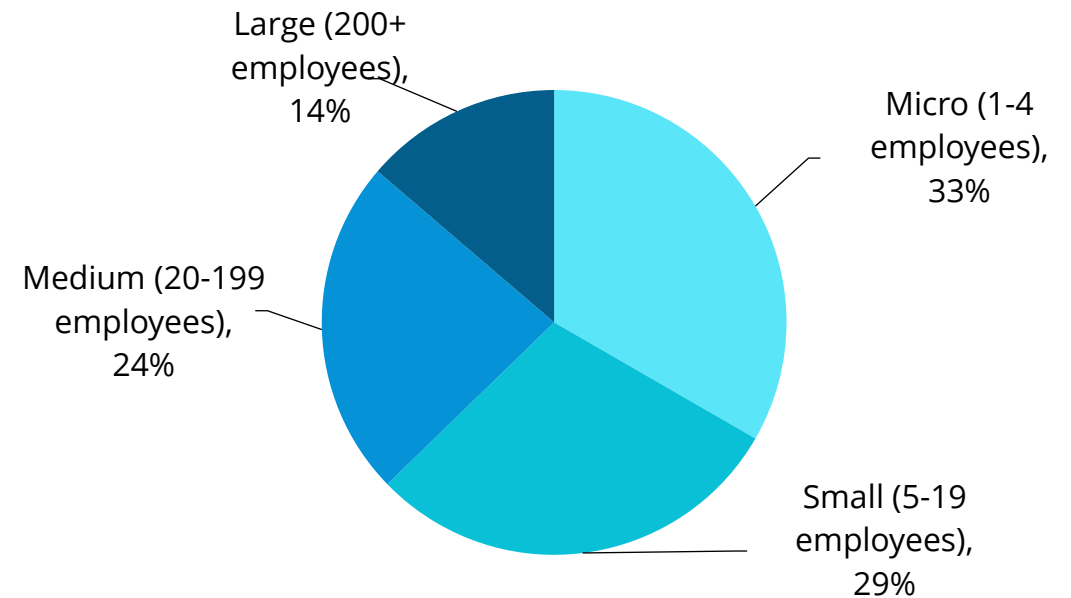
# Respondent profile

**Question:** Where does your business operate in Australia?



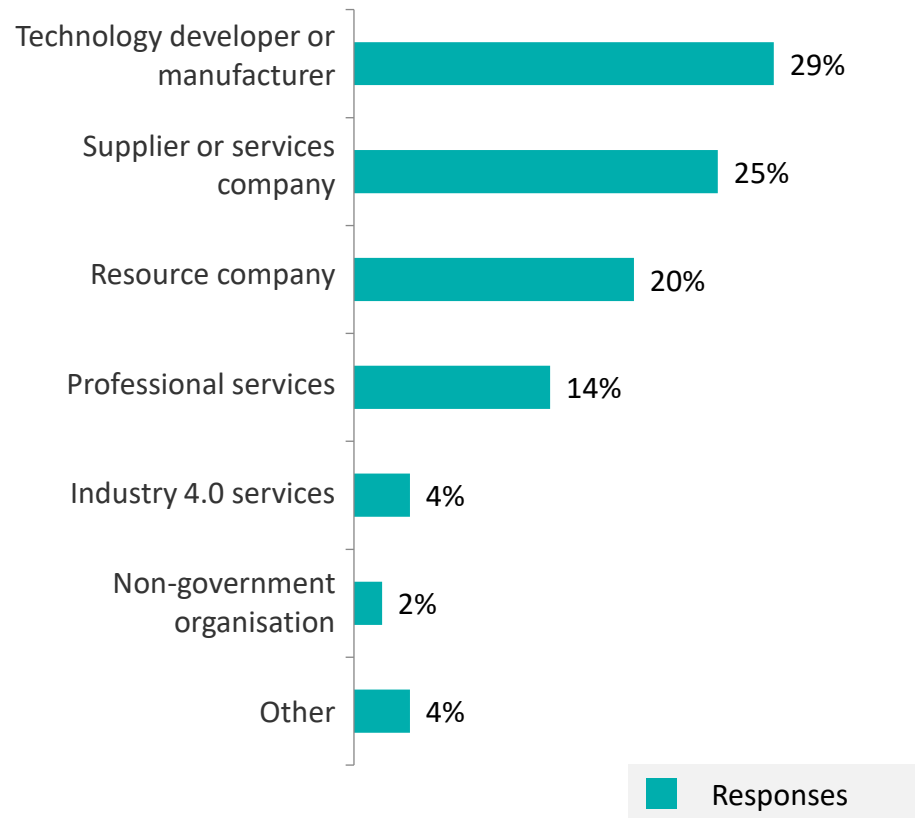
*Note: Respondents could select multiple responses*

**Question:** How many Australian-based staff work in your business?

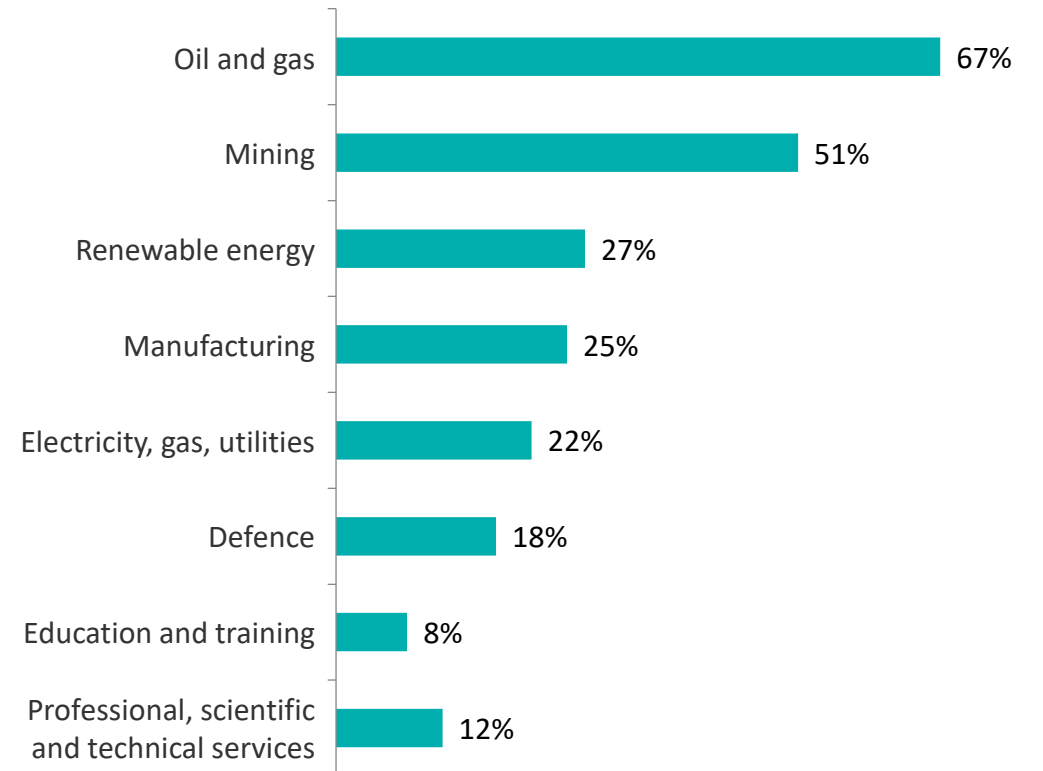


# Respondent profile

**Question:** What type of business do you work for?



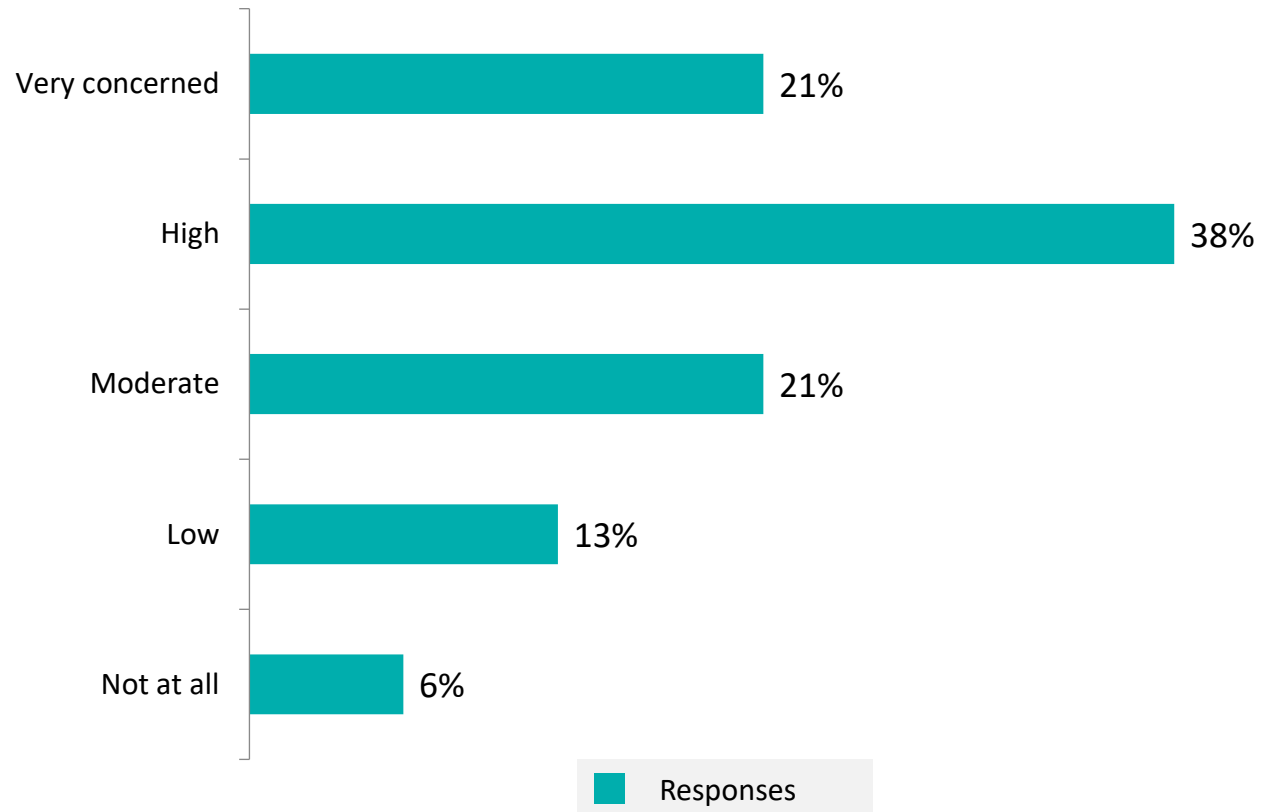
**Question:** In which industry or industries does your business mostly operate? (Select all that apply)



*Note: Respondents could select multiple responses*

# Level of concern about the pandemic

**Question:** To what extent are you concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic impacting your business operations?



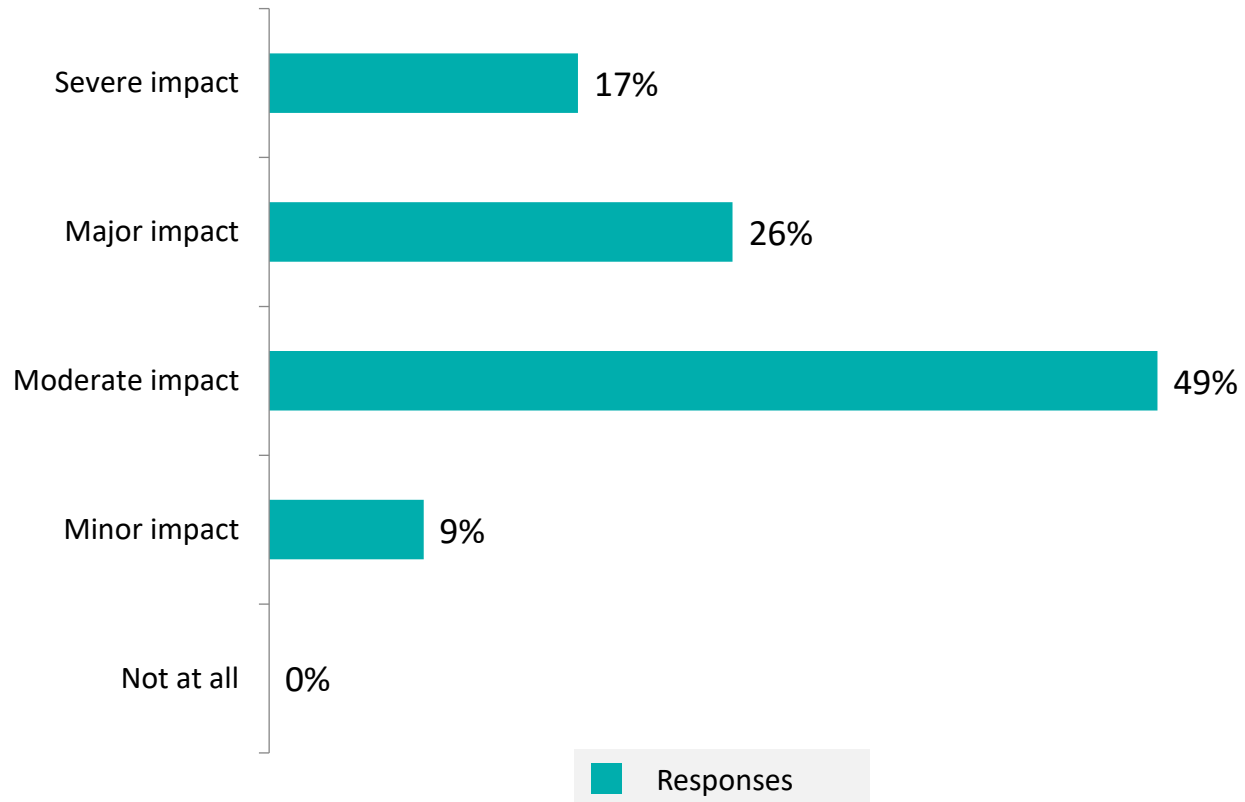
Eighty per cent of businesses reported moderate to very high levels of concern about the pandemic. Concerns primarily related to:

- Border closures, quarantine rules and isolation mandates, which are restricting the movement of people, contributing to staff shortages, and hampering operations and business development across jurisdictions.
- COVID impacts and uncertainty causing project delays and deferrals.
- Persistent supply chain disruptions and difficulty sourcing equipment.
- Significant staff and skills shortages.
- Cost pressures and financial disruption.



# Level of impact

**Question:** To what extent has your business been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

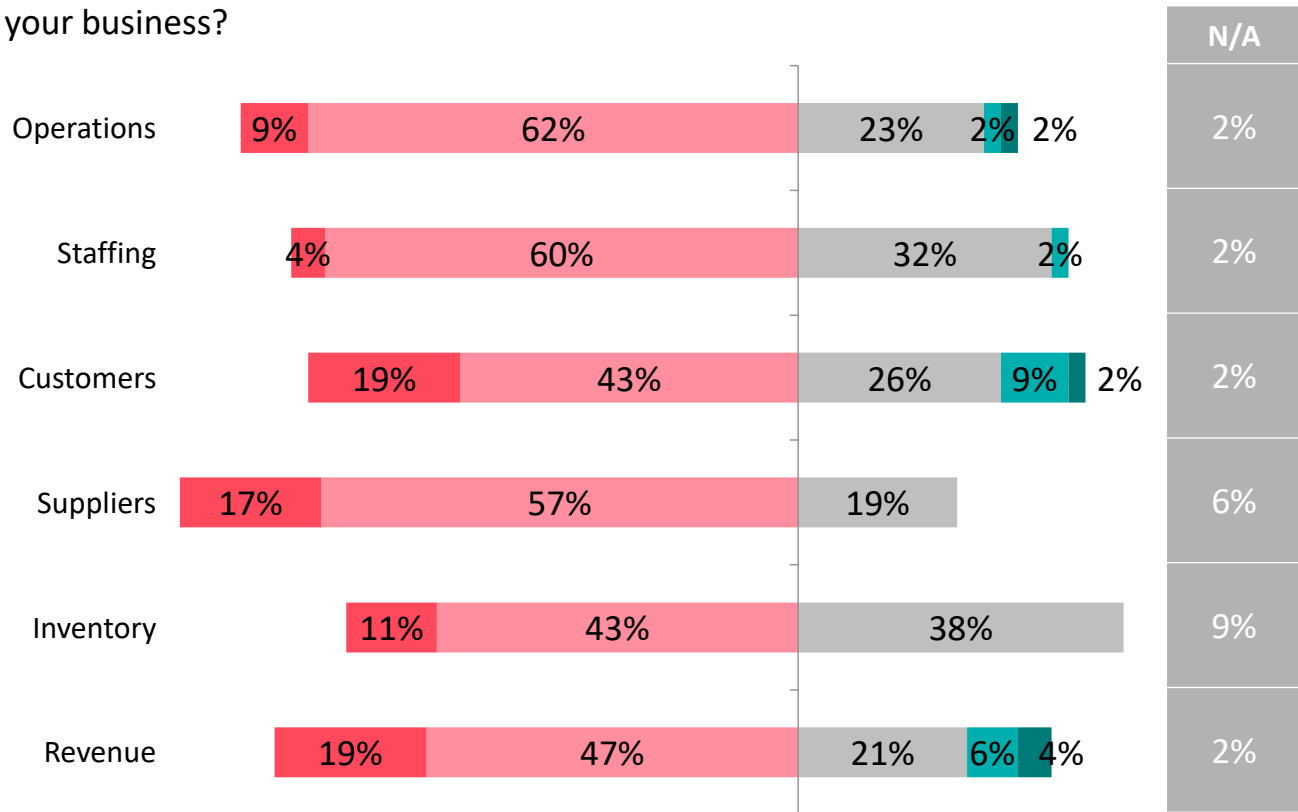


The pandemic is heavily impacting businesses across the sector, with 43 per cent reporting major or severe impacts, and almost half recording moderate impacts. No one has escaped completely unscathed.

Businesses reported financial and operational impacts and in some cases a considerable toll on employee mental health, particularly for staff required to isolate and/or quarantine on multiple occasions.

# Ways in which the pandemic has impacted businesses

**Question:** How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the following aspects of your business?



■ Very negatively   
 ■ Negatively   
 ■ No change   
 ■ Positively   
 ■ Very positively

Businesses suffered negative impacts on multiple fronts, with suppliers, operations, revenue and staffing most commonly affected.

Almost one-in-five businesses reported serious impacts on customers, suppliers and revenue.

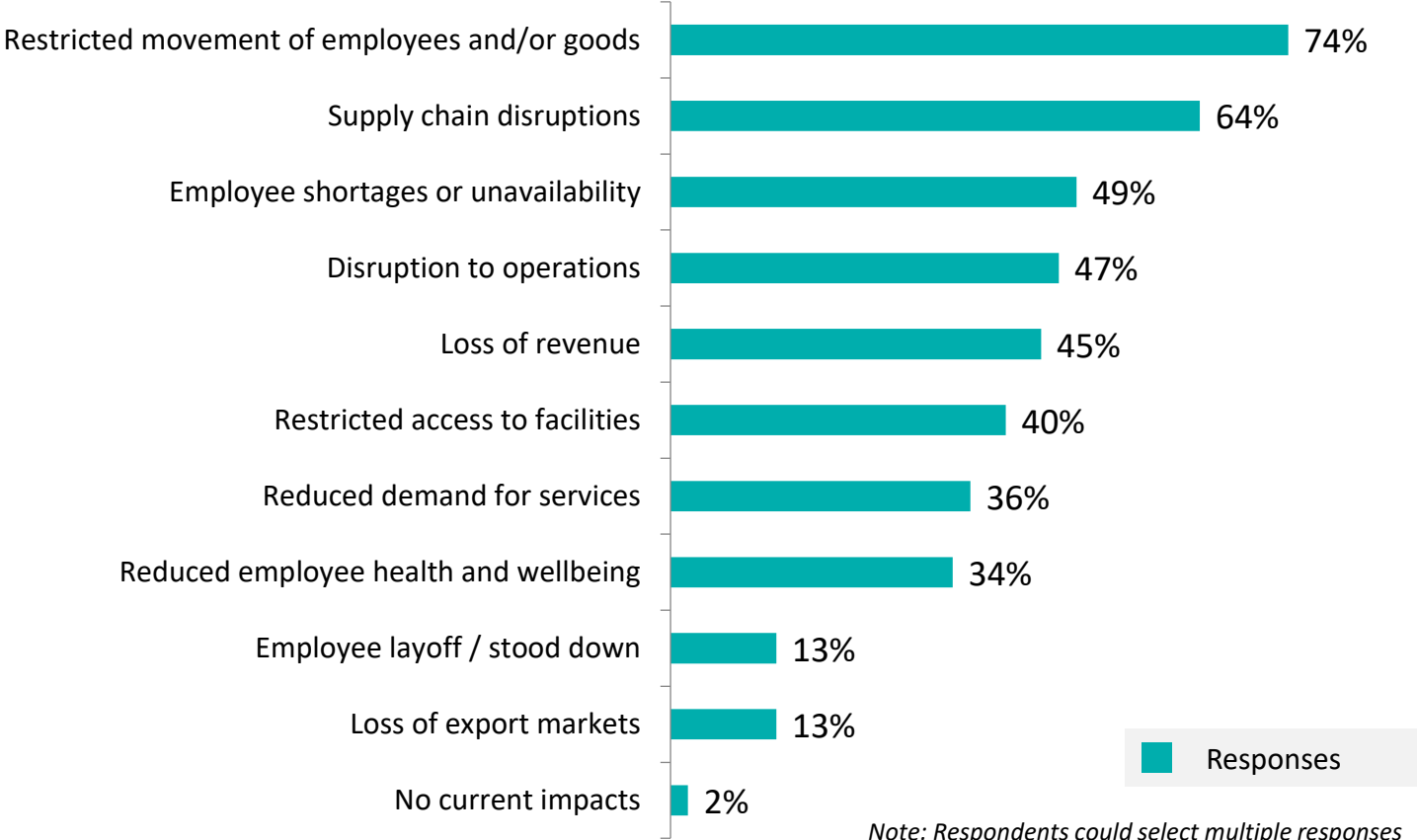
Supply chain issues were commonplace, with businesses also noting increased costs of shipping materials.

Operational impacts were also pervasive. Businesses were forced to change the way in which they worked to maintain operations, and many noted project cancellations, delays and reduced demand for services.

Around one-in-ten businesses benefitted from the restricted movement of people and goods, which has forced other organisations in their regions to source local solutions.

# Current impacts of COVID-19

**Question:** How is the COVID-19 pandemic currently impacting your business?



*Note: Respondents could select multiple responses*

Measures to reduce the spread of the virus – such as isolation mandates and travel / border restrictions – are limiting the movement of people and goods, contributing to supply chain disruptions and impacting operations.

Isolation mandates, border closures, quarantine requirements, and vaccine mandates are contributing to staff shortages that are being experienced by one-in-two businesses.

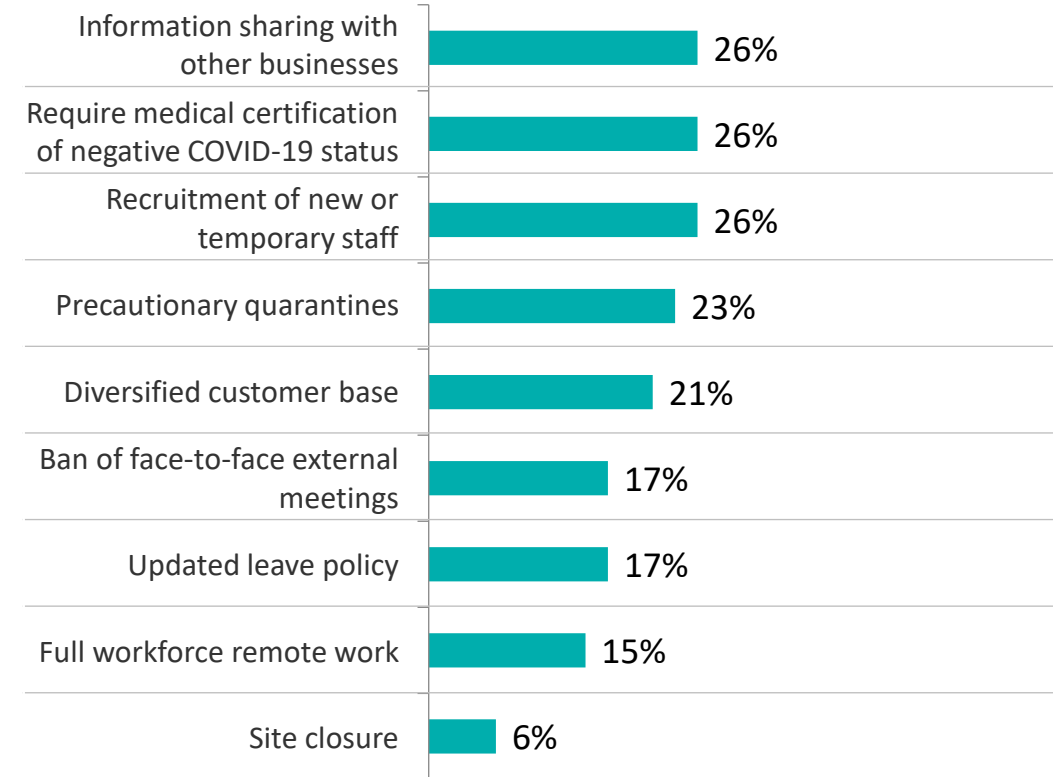
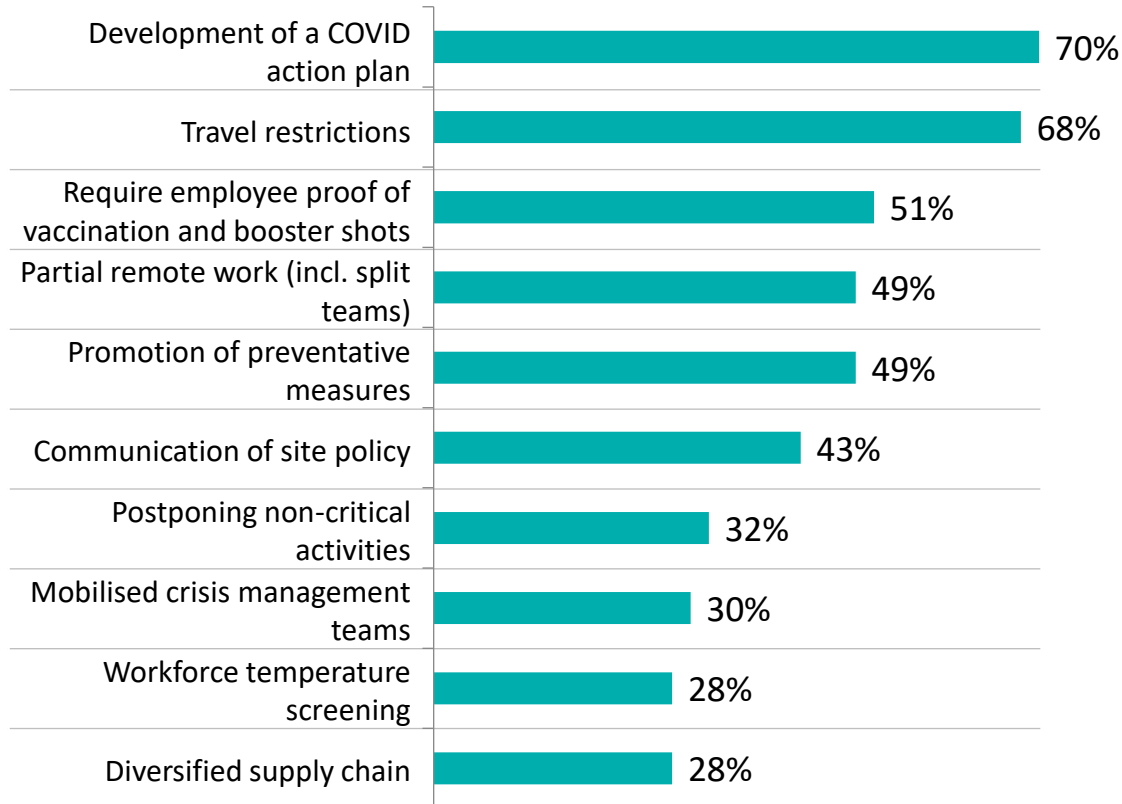
Almost one-in-two businesses reported a loss of revenue, resulting from constrained operations and reduced demand for services. Some businesses highlighted that current uncertainty has resulted in deferred projects and investment, significantly damaging their bottom line.

Restricted travel has hampered businesses’ ability to support existing customers and generate new business in other jurisdictions.



# Mitigating the impacts of COVID-19

**Question:** What actions have your business taken to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19?

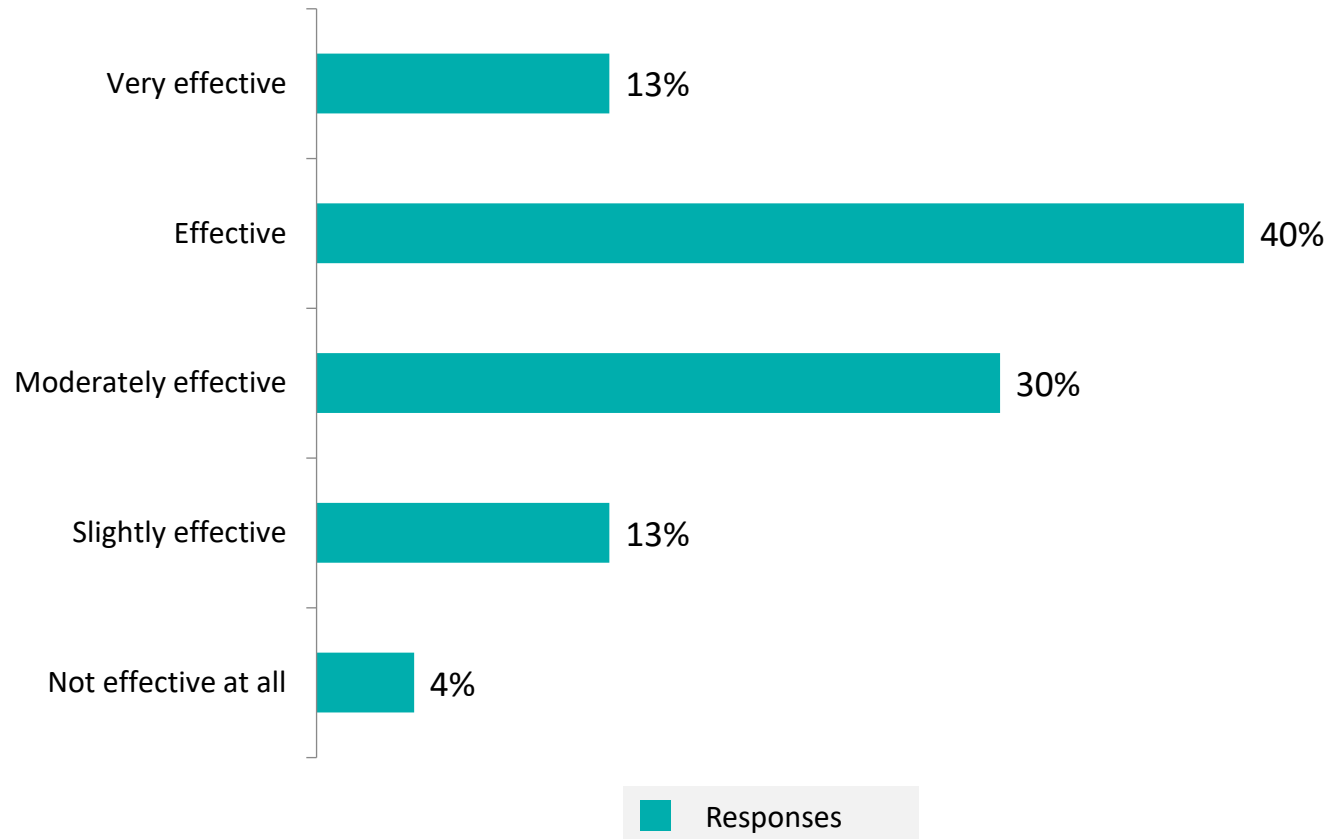


■ Responses

*Note: Respondents could select multiple responses*

# Effectiveness of actions to mitigate impacts of COVID-19

**Question:** How successful were the measures taken by your organisation to maintain operations throughout the pandemic?



More than 80 per cent of businesses reported that measures implemented to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 were at least moderately effective, enabling them to maintain operations and solvency throughout the pandemic.

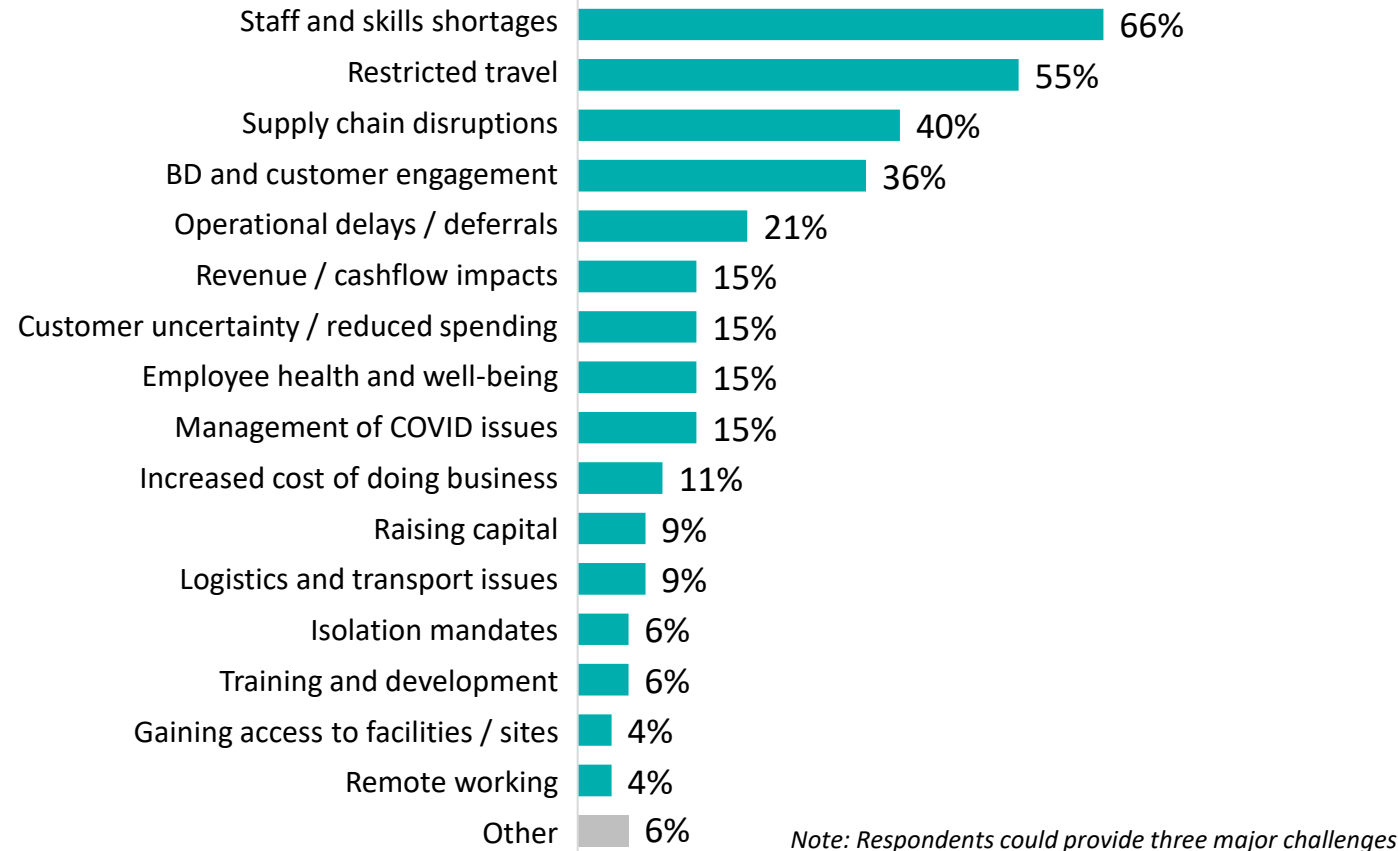
Though several businesses noted severe impacts, and a significant toll on employee health and well-being.

Some businesses also noted that whilst their own actions are critical, government measures and mandates outside of their control have a huge impact on their fate.

Businesses reported that the pandemic has accelerated their digital transformation and capability growth to operate flexibly and remotely across regions.

# Major challenges

**Question:** What are the top three challenges arising from the pandemic that are having or will have the biggest impact on your business?



Staff and skills shortages were reported as a major (top 3) challenge by 66 per cent of businesses, many of whom expected this to be an enduring trend over the next 18 months.

Businesses highlighted the inability to travel as a major challenge, with flow on impacts to managing operations across jurisdictions, business development and customer engagement, raising investment, and skills availability.

Supply chain disruptions have been a major challenge throughout the pandemic and are expected to continue over the next +12 months.

Businesses also highlighted business development in virtual environments is a major challenge. Travel and face-to-face meetings are considered essential by many to develop new markets and customer relationships.



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