

Tradies' election message: cut red tape and speed up consents

CBS survey shows material costs are the biggest pressure, while builders want practical changes that help them get on with the job.

CHRISTCHURCH, 29 September 2026 — Tradies have a clear election challenge for political parties: cut the cost and delay of building. In a CBS Co-operative survey, material prices emerged as the biggest business pressure, while less red tape and faster consents topped the list of changes wanted from the next Government.

Of the respondents who identified as tradies, **67.6%** selected the cost of building materials as a major issue and **52.1%** selected economic uncertainty. **62.0%** wanted the next Government to reduce unnecessary regulation and compliance costs; **56.3%** chose faster consents and lower council fees. A further **46.5%** selected fairer access to government funded work for smaller building companies. These questions allowed more than one answer.

"Tradies are telling us what is making work harder. Costs are high, consent delays hold up jobs, and small firms need a fair chance to compete," says CBS Co-operative CEO Carl Taylor.

"Political parties should be clear about what they will change and how quickly builders will see the difference on site."

There are also signs of confidence returning: **52.1%** of tradie respondents said they were confident about their business outlook over the next 12 months. "We're hearing from tradies that their forward-work pipelines are starting to fill again. That is positive for the outlook, and we want to see that momentum continue," Taylor says.

If the election were held today

Asked which party would receive their party vote, **28.7%** of all survey respondents chose ACT New Zealand, with National and New Zealand First each on **17.8%**. The Opportunity Party drew **7.9%**, Labour and the Greens each **5.9%**, and Te Pāti Māori **2.0%**. A further **10.9%** were undecided and **3.0%** preferred not to say. These results reflect this self-selected survey group.

The appetite for practical reform is unmistakable. Nationally consistent consent requirements and council performance standards won support from **90.1%** of respondents. Stronger payment protections for builders, subcontractors and suppliers also drew **90.1%** support, while **79.2%** backed better financial support for employers who train and retain apprentices.

Warranty reform must keep good builders in business

A government-backed home warranty scheme similar to Queensland's, instead of compulsory private warranty insurance, won support from **58.4%** of respondents. CBS remains concerned about access under the Government's proposed warranty reforms. Capable, qualified builders who see no reason to join a membership organisation must still be able to obtain cover. As set out in the CBS manifesto, warranty products should be independent of membership groups, with open registration and transparent eligibility criteria. Consumer protection should not shut good tradies out.

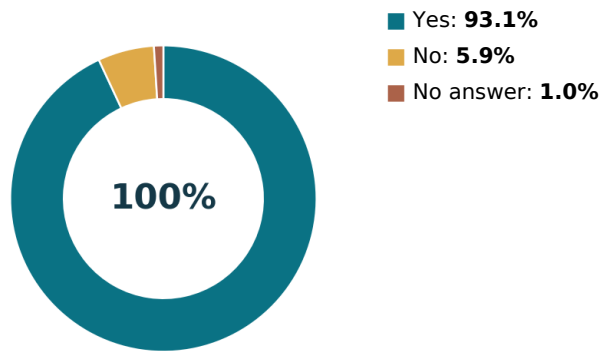
Media contact: Carl Taylor, CEO, CBS Co-operative

Survey results

All charts show the percentage of survey respondents selecting each answer. Questions allowing several answers use bar graphs, where percentages can add to more than 100%.

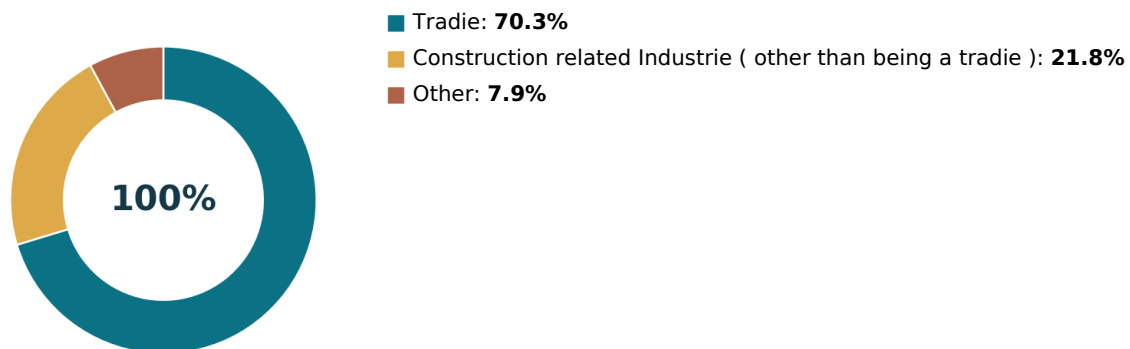
CBS membership

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



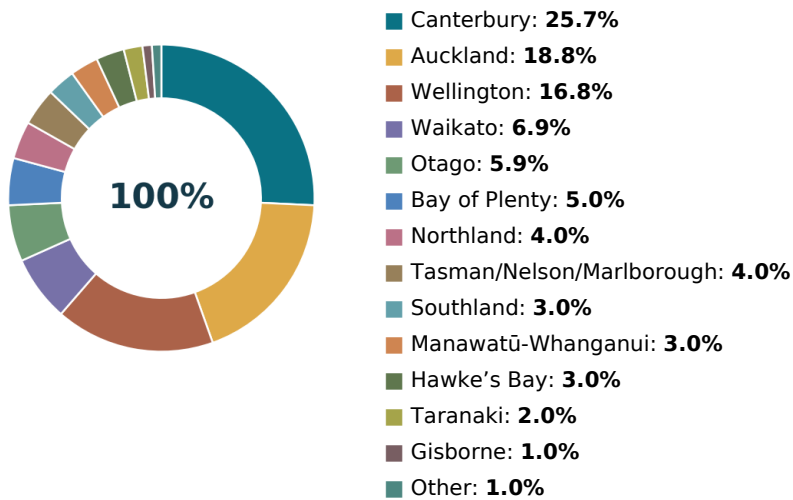
Industry

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



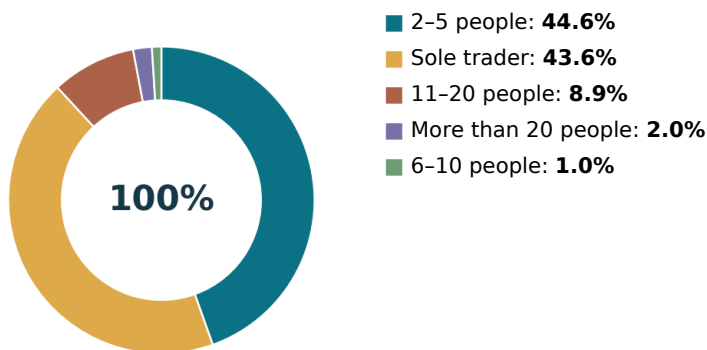
Business location

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



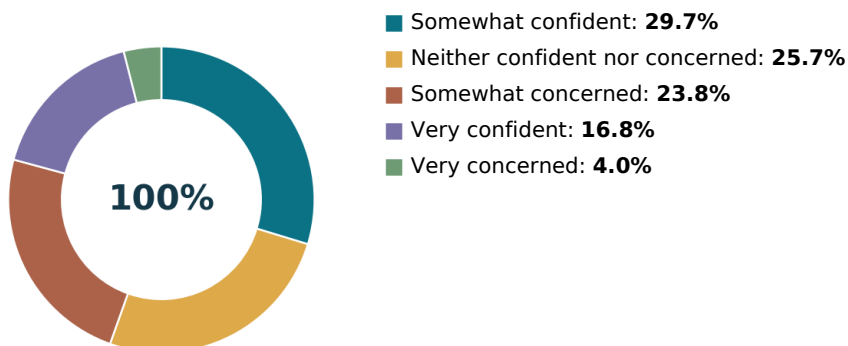
Business size

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



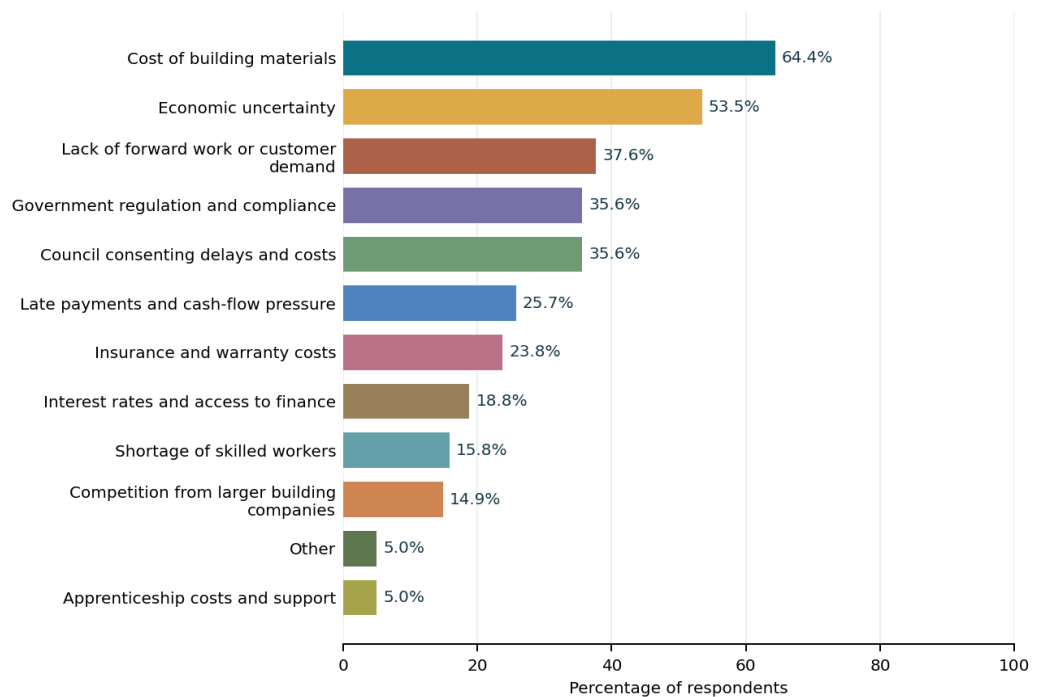
Business outlook over the next 12 months

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



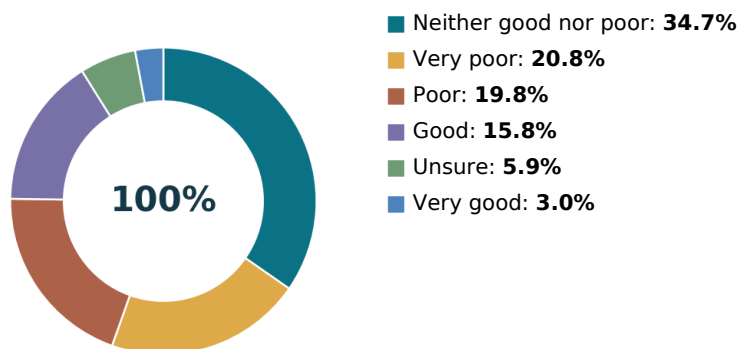
Biggest issues affecting business

Percentage of respondents; multiple answers allowed.



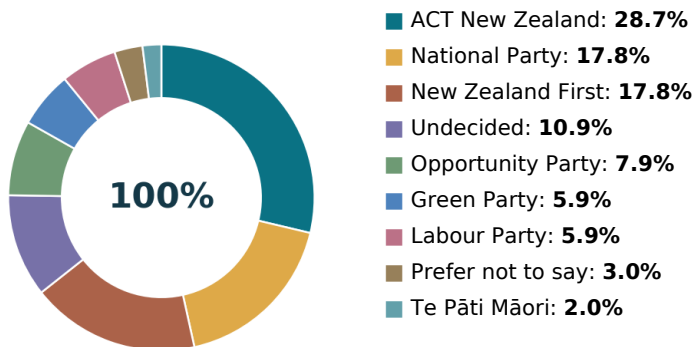
Government performance for small and medium building businesses

Percentage of all respondents, including any "No answer" slice.



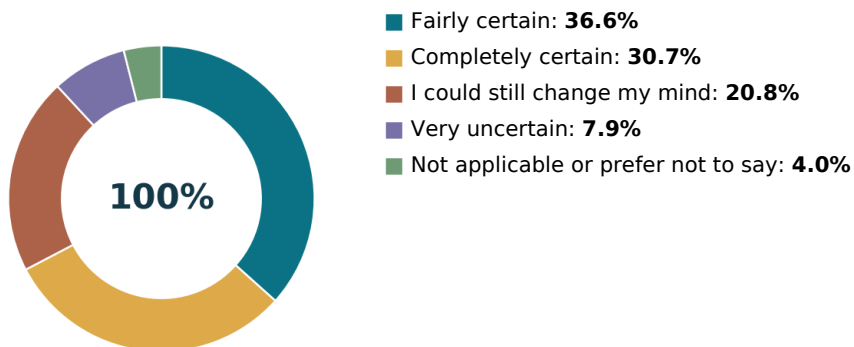
Party vote if the election were held today

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



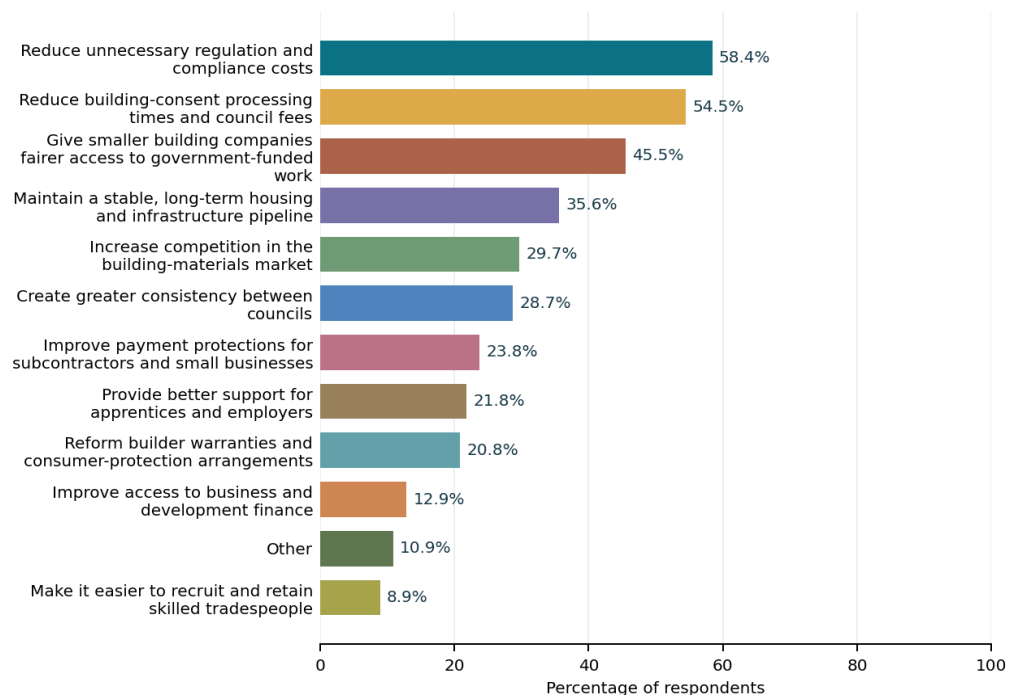
Certainty of party-vote choice

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



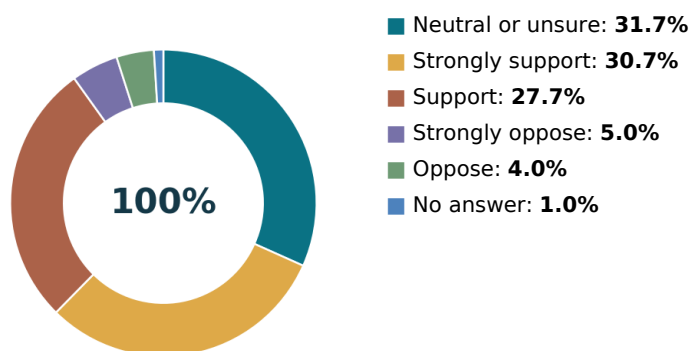
Priorities for the next Government

Percentage of respondents; multiple answers allowed.



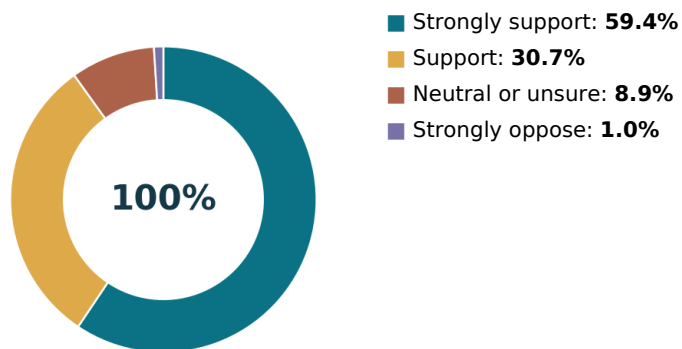
Government-backed home warranty scheme

Percentage of all respondents, including any "No answer" slice.



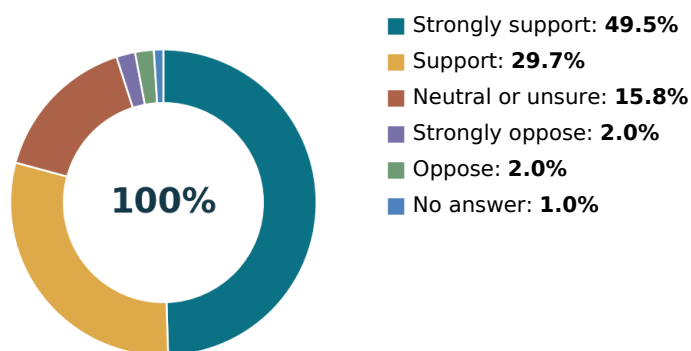
Consistent building consent requirements

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



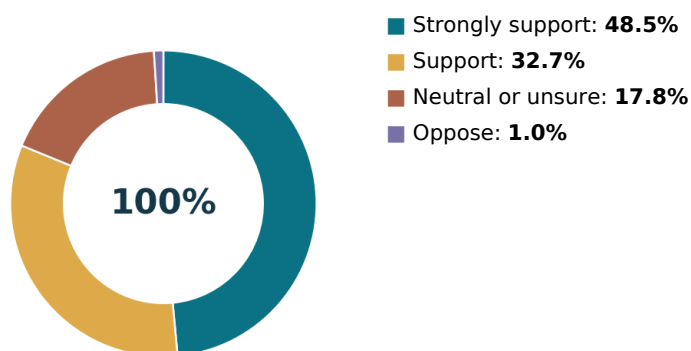
Financial support for apprenticeship employers

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



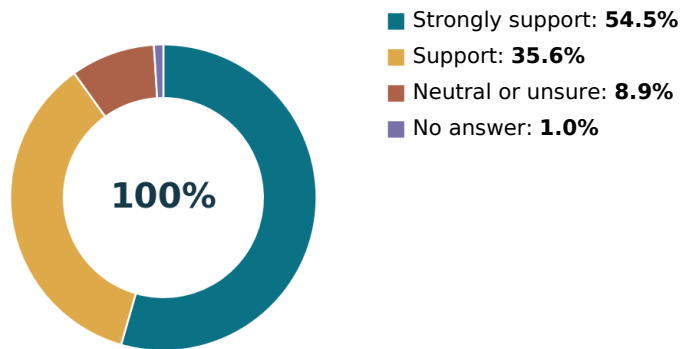
Fair access to government construction work

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



Prompt payment protections

Percentage of all respondents, including any “No answer” slice.



Source and method: CBS Member Pre-Election Survey 2026.csv. The survey was voluntary and self-selected, so the findings are not representative of all New Zealand tradies, construction businesses or voters. Release percentages about tradies use the tradie subgroup as the base. Charts use all survey respondents as their base and include unanswered responses in single-answer questions. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place. The final free-text question is not charted.