



## **Small business survey results.**

**The Page Research Centre's Working Group  
on Small Business.**



# Have your say - Small Business Survey

Information gained by this survey is completely confidential.  
If the space allowed is insufficient please attach extras pages.

Please number (from 1 to 4) the four most important initiatives to you:

- Complexity issues in tax legislation.
- Reduction in compliance costs.
- Advice and assistance for small business
- Industrial relations – unfair dismissal.
- Extra help for regional employers who take on New Apprentices in occupations with skill shortages.
- The Trade Practices Act and its effect on small business.
- Low interest rates

What problems do you have running a small business?

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What do you believe is the single most important thing that could be done to help your small business?

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*Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Printed and authorised by T Dixon, Page Research Centre Ltd, 7 National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600.  
The Page Research Centre Ltd is sponsored by the Department of Finance and Administration*

If you would like further information please complete the following: (optional)

Title (eg Mr, Ms, Mrs, Dr) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel can be done at a local level to create more jobs and improve our regional economy?

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Are there any other issues you believe are important to small business?

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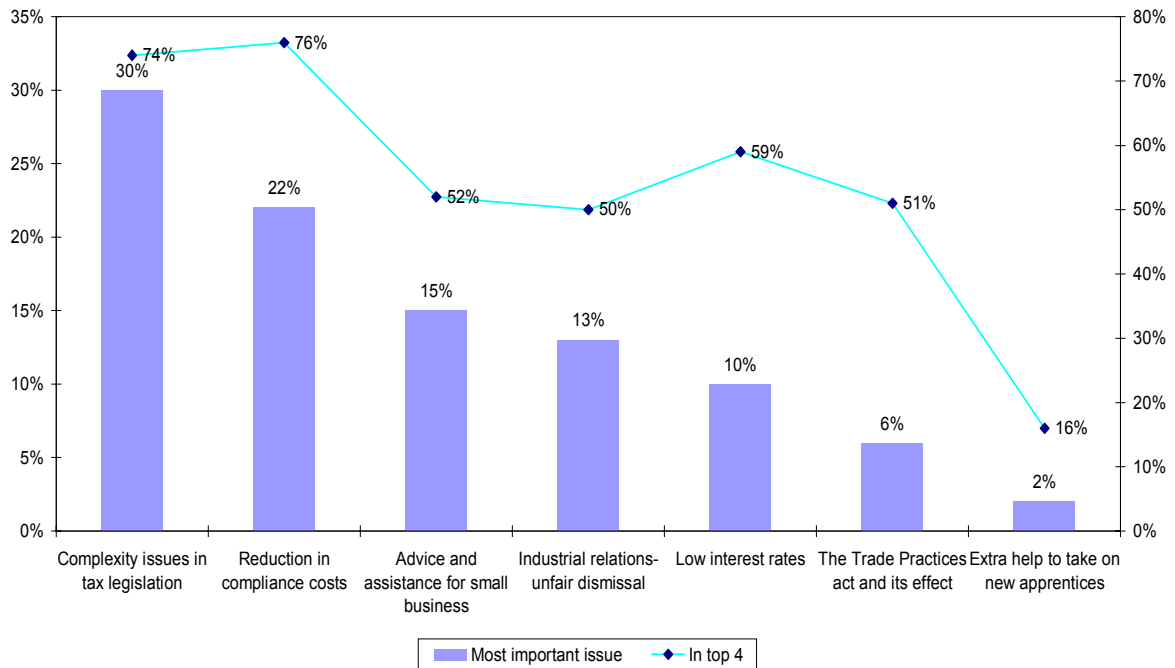
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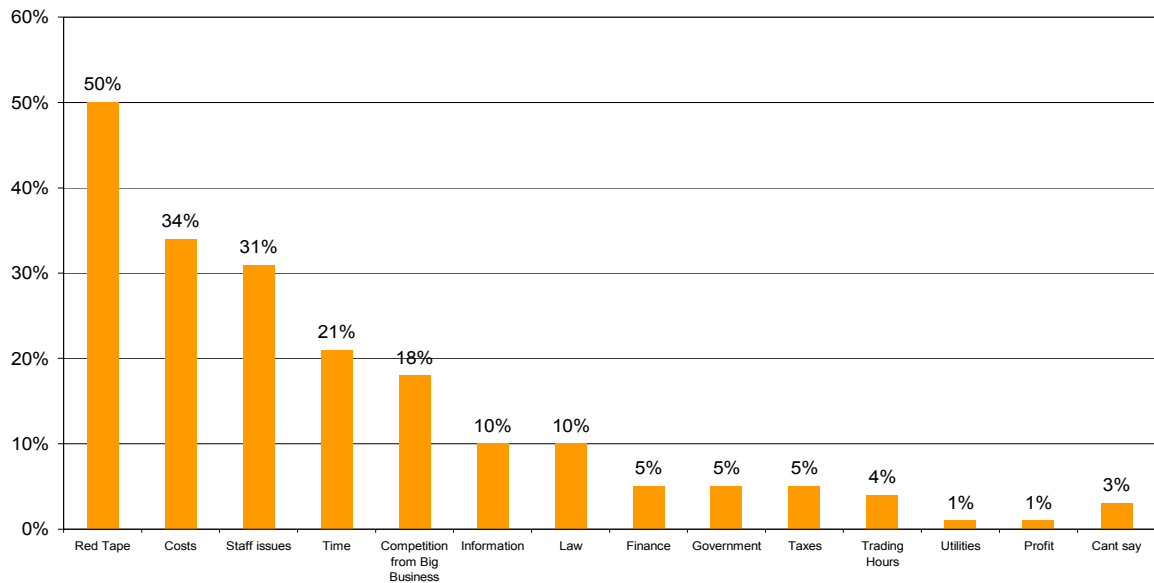
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**Q1- Chosen issues vs most important issues**  
**(Bars = % who selected as "most important issue". Dots = % who included in top 4 issues)**



Thirty percent of those who were surveyed identified complexity issues in tax legislation. This was by far the most identified issue out of the seven presented. Twenty-two percent of those surveyed highlighted a reduction in compliance costs as the most important issue facing small business. The third highest issue identified from the survey was the need for advice and assistance for small business.

## Question 2- What problems do you have running a small business?

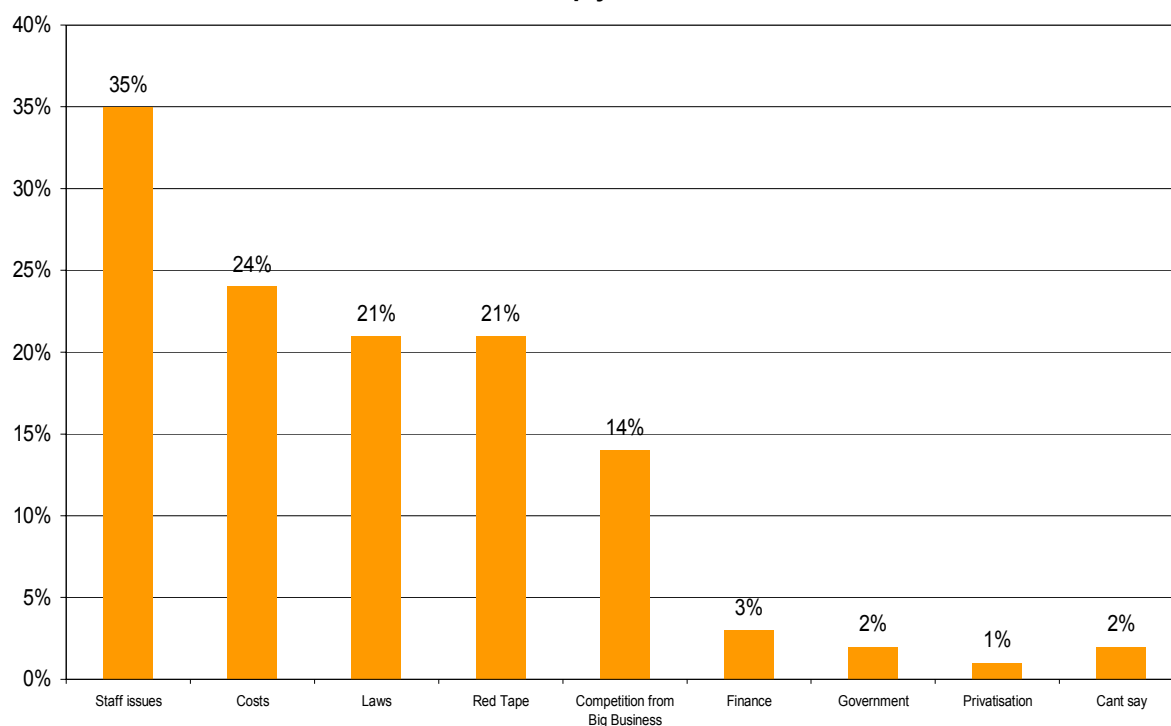


“Red tape” appeared as the greatest problem in running a small business. Fifty per cent of those surveyed listed “red tape” as an issue. The survey respondents identified “red tape” as compliance with government regulations which included; GST paper work, Occupational Health and Safety and superannuation. Cost issues were the second most identified issue. Thirty-four percent identified the cost of finance, insurance, compliance, superannuation Workcover<sup>1</sup> and general rise in costs as a major problem in running a small business. Staffing was the third most identified problem confronting business. Thirty-one percent said the cost of employing staff; unfair dismissal laws and training were all problems facing small business.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that compliance, superannuation and WorkCover are also seen as “red tape” therefore the administration and the costs of these activities would appear the greatest problem confronting small business.

### Question 3- What do you believe is the single most important thing that could be done to help your small business?

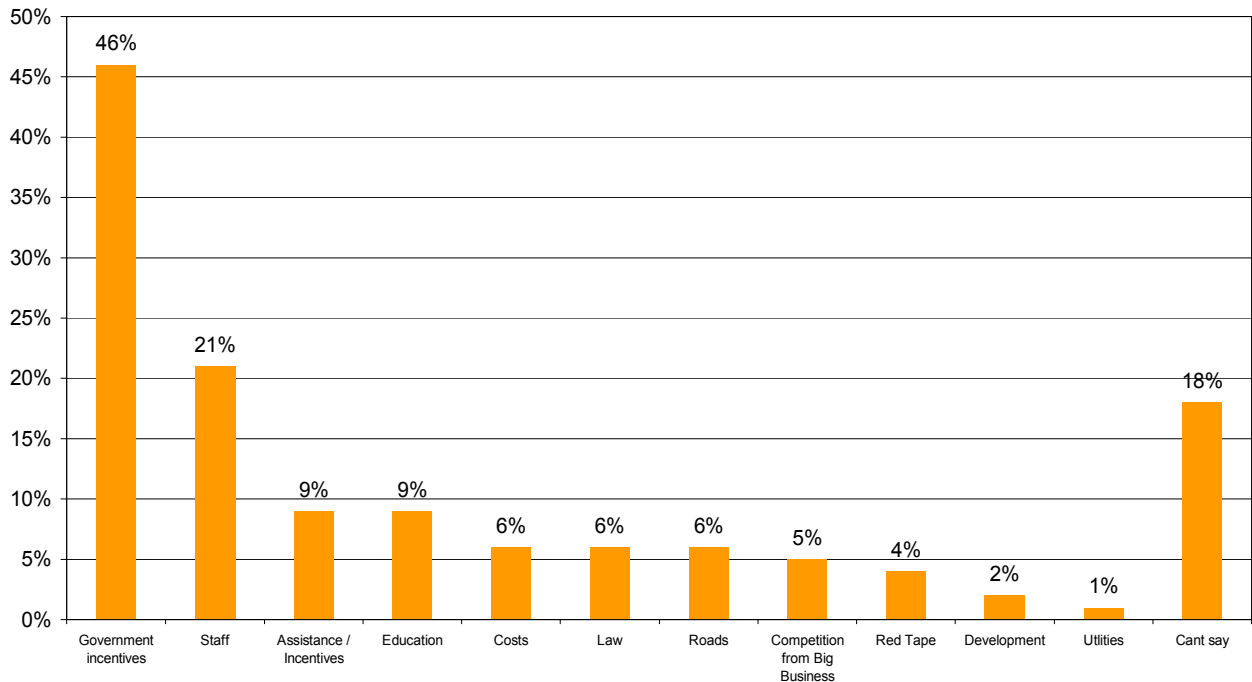


Thirty-five percent of those surveyed said the single most important thing which could help small business was assistance in the area of staffing. In this area the majority called for a review of unfair dismissal laws and a reduction in employment costs such as tax/super/workers compensation. The second highest identified issue was cost. Twenty-four percent of participants said cost factors such as interest rates, tax, reduced electricity costs and a reduction in employment taxes (payroll tax) would assist small business. Equal third was law and “red tape”<sup>2</sup>. Twenty-one percent of participants wanted laws which were fairer for small business, laws which were easily understood, reduced restrictive legislation and removal of exorbitant liability claims. In terms of “red tape” participants wanted compensation for times spent on forms, less time spent on “red tape” and simplified GST Laws.

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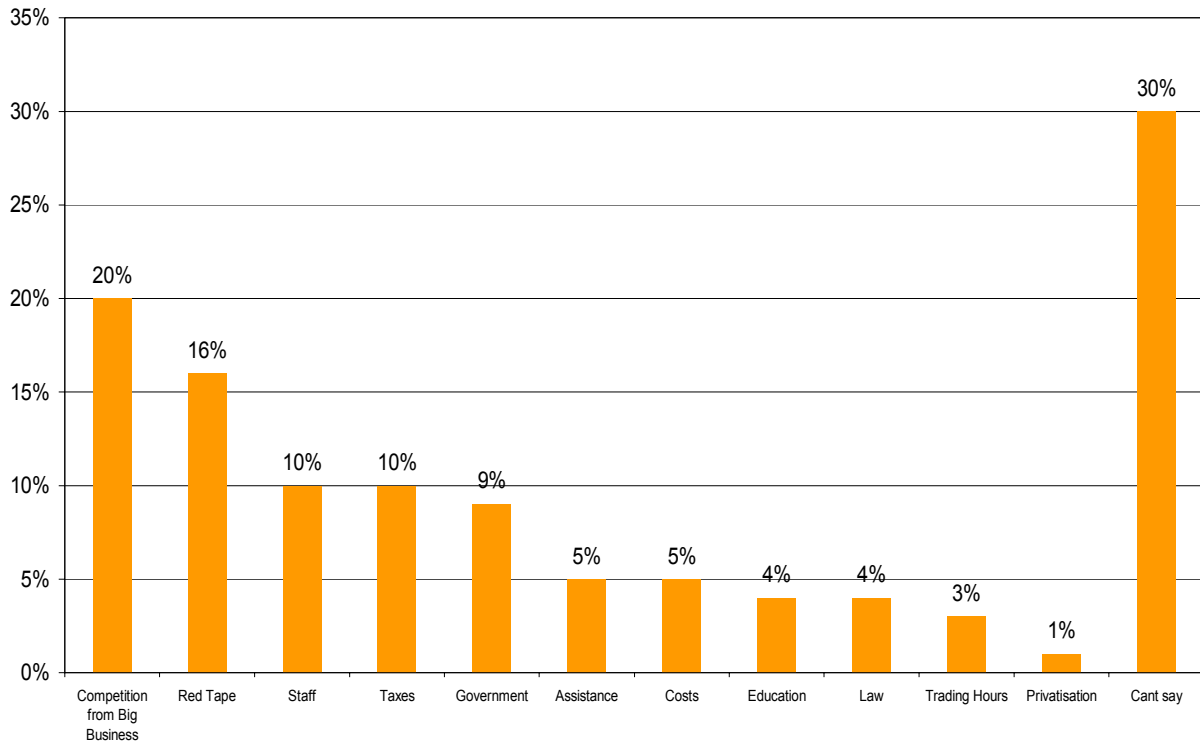
<sup>2</sup> Both law and “red tape” got twenty-one percent which indicates a 1 percent margin of error. This in part due to the large amount of participants who when asked to write a single most important thing tended to write several.

**Question 4- What do you feel can be done at a local level to create more jobs and improve our regional economy?**



Forty-six percent identified local, state and federal government as having a role in improving the regional economy. Participants highlighted greater powers for local governments, decentralisation of government departments, government campaigns to encourage people to shop local and promote tourism, infrastructure to make rural areas more appealing, and more initiatives to stimulate the economy. Twenty-one percent of participants said staffing was an issue which would improve the regional economy. They highlighted the need for greater assistance for trainees, the removal of penalty rates on wages and unfair dismissal laws repealed. While staff is certainly an issue it is difficult to ascertain how it directly relates to an improved regional economy. It appears that perhaps outside of government initiatives many did not have a clear idea about what could be done beyond what they had already stated in earlier questions. Emphasis on government intervention and the diverse range of ideas for improvements to the regional economy suggests participants are unclear about what to do on this issue.

**Question 5- Are there any other issues you believe are important to small business?**



The fifth question was too broad to be effective. Participants did not have the direction to add anything they had not already stated. However, twenty percent indicated a concern about big business in rural and regional areas. Participants had indicated that they were concerned with chain stores trying to dominate the marketplace. Those surveyed said there should be protection for small business and that most of the subsidies tended to go to big business. Politicians are seen as bowing to big business.