



An Australian Government Initiative



**BAROSSA GAWLER LIGHT ADELAIDE PLAINS**

# Regional Business Survey 2025

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## Survey Details

The survey was open from Friday 24 October to Sunday 16 November 2025 (24 days) and promoted through RDA BGLAP and council communication channels, stakeholder networks, and in-person engagement at regional events. LGA partners and stakeholders were provided with packs to support distribution.

## High Level Survey Results

- 86 completions – note we needed 362 survey completions to have a confidence level of 95% and margin of error of 5%.
- 72% of businesses stated their costs of inputs had increased in the last 12 months. Cost of inputs and rising costs of living is impacting businesses and their optimism for the next 12 months.
- 62% of employing businesses stated they had difficulty recruiting and/or retaining staff.
- Infrastructure challenges in the region (digital and physical) and balancing growth with heritage and regional identity are top of mind for businesses.
- Respondents were largely in agreement or neutral in their views on RDABGLAP's regional priorities and core business activities.
- 44% of businesses surveyed have a turnover of over \$500k annually, indicating a strong representation of established operations.
- 58% of businesses surveyed are long-established, with over half operating for 6+ years.
- 81% of responses came directly from owners or owner-operators—indicating highly reliable, first-hand business input.
- Responses were dominated by brick-and-mortar, followed by home-based, with a clear presence of hybrid online models.

## Summary

### Survey Respondents

The 2025 Regional Business Survey captured responses from 86 businesses across the Barossa, Gawler, Light and Adelaide Plains region. The breakdown of survey respondents by LGA is mostly reflective of each LGA's concentration of businesses, with Barossa having the highest participation at 37 and greatest number of businesses, followed by Light (24), Adelaide Plains (15) and Gawler (10).

Survey respondents highlighted the dominance of the region's micro- and small-business profile, with 65% being non-employing or employing fewer than five people, and a further 24% employing 6–19 staff. 81% of respondents identified as owners or owner-operators, providing strong decision-maker insight into business needs and priorities.

The business community is well-established, with 41% operating for more than 10 years, 17% for 6–10 years, 23% for two to five years and only 19% operating for under two years. 44% of businesses surveyed have a turnover of over \$500k annually, also indicating a strong representation of established operations.

Industry representation was diverse, led by Agriculture (14 responses), Professional Services (11), Health and Social Assistance (8), Accommodation and Food Services (9), Retail (8), and Manufacturing (6).

Operationally, respondents included but were not limited to brick-and-mortar businesses (37), home-based (30), farming/agriculture (17) and hybrid or online models (18).

Overall, the survey reflects a mature, varied and strongly engaged business community that mirrors the economic landscape of the BGLAP region.

### **Key Challenges**

Key challenges in our local economy faced by business include rising cost of inputs and workforce, with 72% of business reporting their costs of inputs had increased in the last 12 months and 62% of employing businesses stated they had difficulty recruiting and/or retaining staff.

Businesses also highlighted infrastructure issues — especially roads, telecommunications, development planning, and workforce housing.

### **Business Performance and Confidence**

Survey results show that profit and business confidence have shifted unevenly, with businesses experiencing stable or increasing investment in new equipment despite declining or stagnant cash reserves. At the same time, significant cost pressures across utilities, materials, freight and labour continue to constrain financial performance and operational resilience.

### **RDABGLAP Engagement and Strategic Planning**

There was strong support for RDABGLAP's current strategic priorities, with almost half of respondents having engaged with RDABGLAP in the past 12 months. Networking and collaboration were consistently identified as key value-adds.

### **Open Text Highlights: Questions**

**Please share any additional comments you have on your business' capability needs, including any needs not listed above.**

I have had an abundance of potential work fall in my lap but have turned it down because there are no suitable staff available. – **Barossa Council Business**

Simplified legislative requirements would be extremely beneficial; both at local and state government levels, particularly for new entrant businesses as they don't have the access to the capital to outsource the work and can get caught up in the paperwork. – **Light Regional Council Business**

**In what ways do you expect infrastructure and land use/development planning to impact your business in the next 12 months?**

Lack of public transport for visitors is a significant issue impacting our brand and reputation, particularly during major/high-yield events. – **Barossa Council Business**

**What makes this region an attractive place to run a business?**

Our region provides the right balance between accessibility to services and peaceful lifestyle living which brings the perfect energy for a business to succeed. – **Town of Gawler Business**

We do not have affordable housing nor affordable land. Our young practitioners are living with their parents and driving up from the city rather than trying to find a house here. This leads to high levels of burnout and leaving the area. The cost of doing business here is not cheaper. It's actually higher. I'm having to compete with Adelaide wages whilst being expected to charge rural prices for our services. – **Barossa Council Business**

My region is on the cusp of moving forward in the tourism industry, moving from mainly agriculture to everything that comes with being a stronger tourism destination. – **Adelaide Plains Business**

### **Open Text Highlights: Key Topics**

**Drought**

I have a full-time job away from the farm. The drought stretched me to the limit financially through the months of having to buy hard feed for the animals. – **Adelaide Plains Business**

## **RDA**

Business networking and connection is a really big part of the role that the RDA has had on my own business. – **Barossa Council Business**

I'd like to see more opportunities for facilitating business connections and collaborations across the region. RDABGLAP is already a go-to for many of us, and the team's knowledge base and network are phenomenal. Expanding this role, perhaps by reintroducing a regional business directory or hosting more structured networking initiatives, could further strengthen connections and create valuable opportunities for collaboration and growth within the region. – **Light Regional Council Business**

## **So What?**

The survey results reinforced many of the issues already observed across the region and highlighted several opportunities and areas of focus for RDABGLAP:

- Businesses have faced increasing input costs over the past 12 months, with inflationary and drought-related pressures expected to persist.
- Businesses see value in collective regional identity and partnership, this is a vital role for RDABGLAP to continue.
- Workforce shortages, housing pressures, infrastructure gaps and regulatory complexity are impacting business performance, which are closely aligned with RDABGLAP current Strategic Priorities.
- Adoption of new business practices (AI, automation, technology) shows a combined 84% adoption level (Partially + Mostly + Completely), though a follow up question asked at the B2B End of Year Networking Event (27 November 2025) shows there are still gaps in knowledge and support needed for businesses in this area.
- Businesses favour practical, skills-based support, in comparison to areas such as succession planning and improving the environmental sustainability of their business.

## **What Next?**

The results of the survey have informed further development of RDABGLAP's new Strategic Plan. Consultation on the Strategic Plan will be undertaken from January through to May with key stakeholders, to be adopted by the RDABGLAP Board in June 2026.