



**Business
Canterbury**
Our Chamber of Commerce

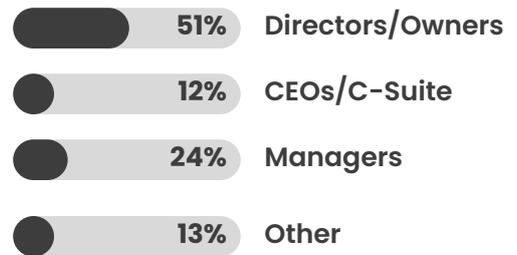
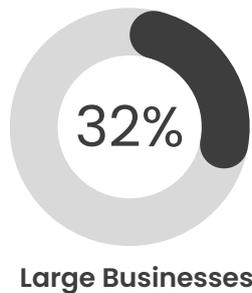
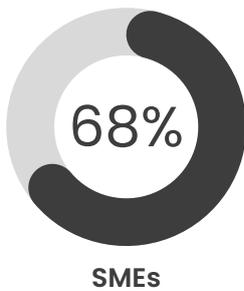
Quarterly Canterbury Business Survey

February 2026 | In field: 9 February – 28 February

Canterbury Snapshot



Respondents



Top issues

1. Consumer confidence and demand
2. Productivity and growth
3. Compliance costs
4. Cashflow and account receivable/payable
5. Inflation and interest rates

Top Industry Response

1. Professional services
2. Manufacturing
3. Construction and civil
4. Primary Industries & Agriculture
5. Software and Technology

↑ 1%

76%

Expect the Canterbury economy to be stronger in 12 months.

↑ 7%

71%

Expect to invest in property, plant, and equipment within the next 12 months.

↑ 3%

70%

Expect to hire new staff within the next 12 months.

↑ 1%

76%

Expect stronger financial performance over the next 12 months.

↑ 6%

51%

Think the Government is managing the economy better than 12 months ago

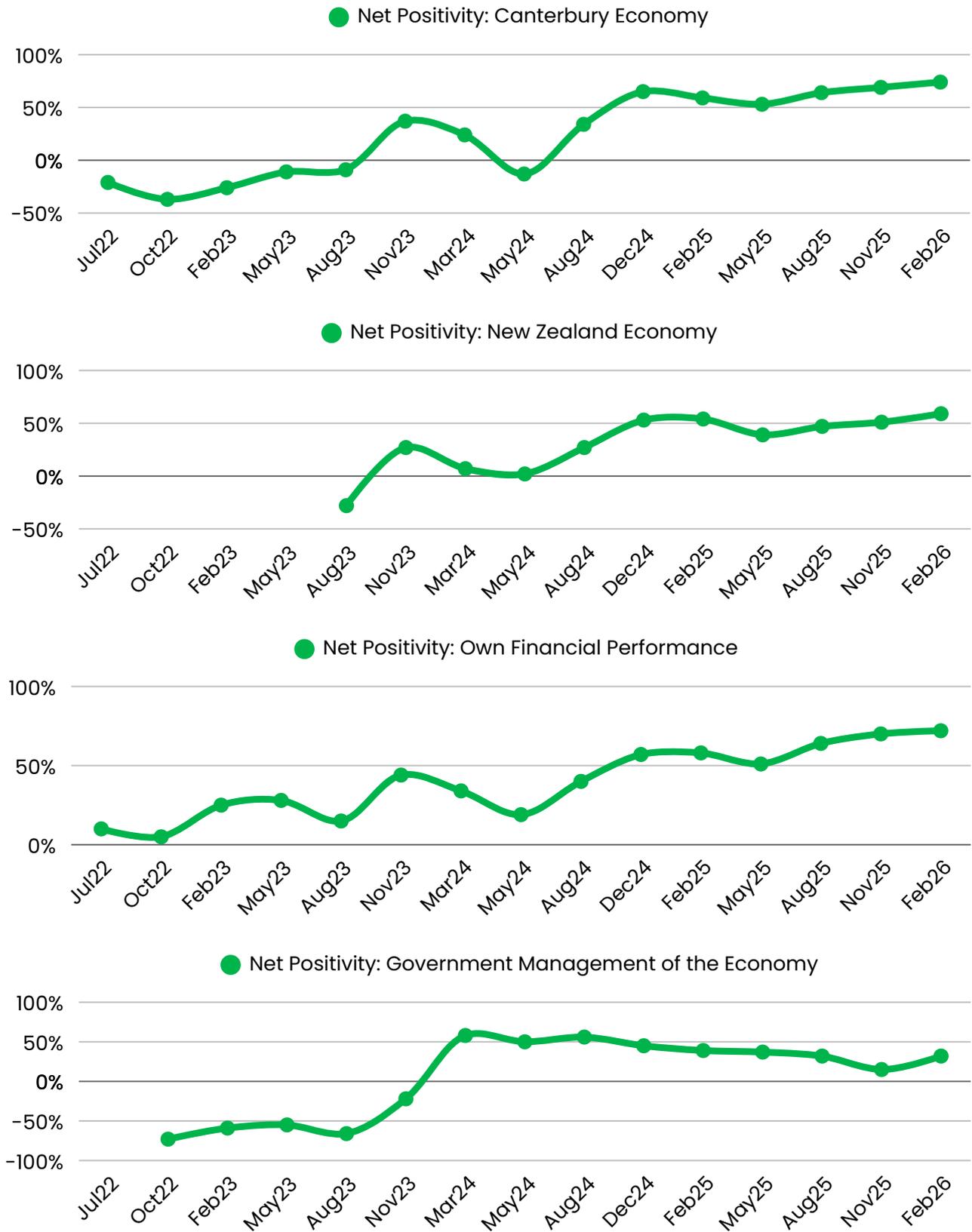
↑ 19%

84%

Are confident in their ability to deal with disruption.

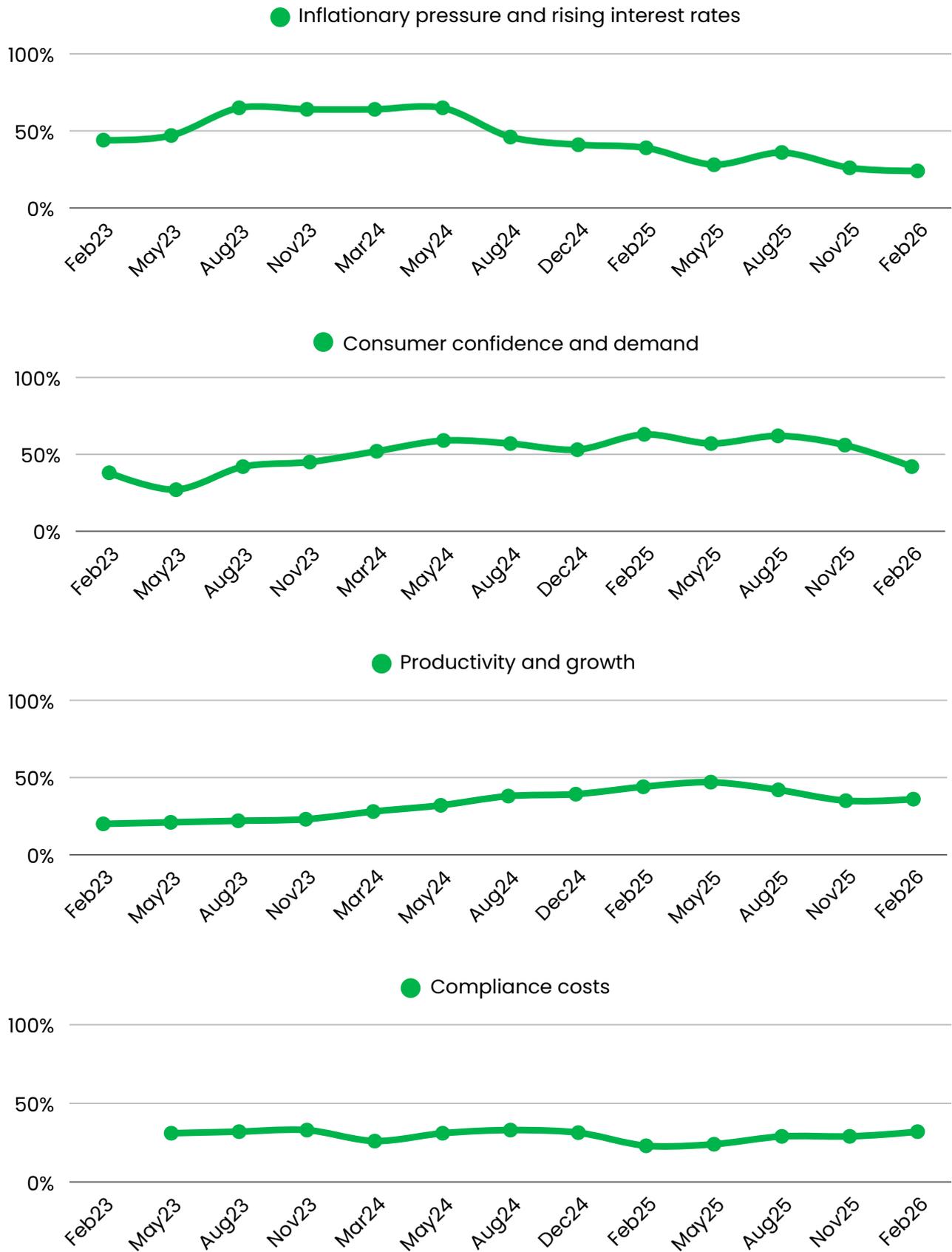
Business confidence: net positivity scores

To calculate a net positivity score, we subtract the percentage of negative responses from the percentage of positive responses. A higher net positivity score indicates a more positive overall sentiment, while a lower score suggests a more negative sentiment.



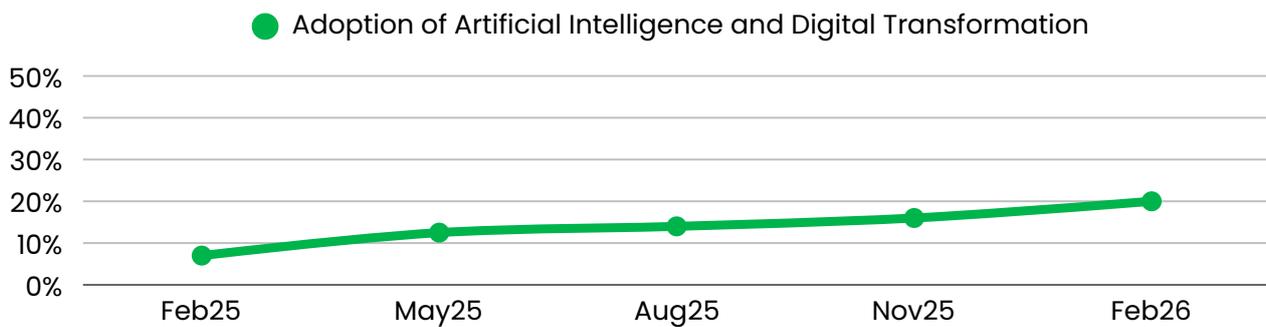
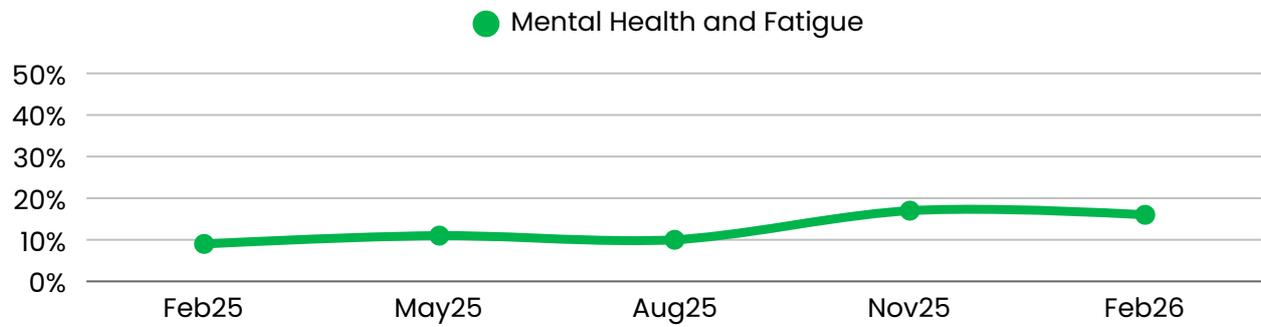
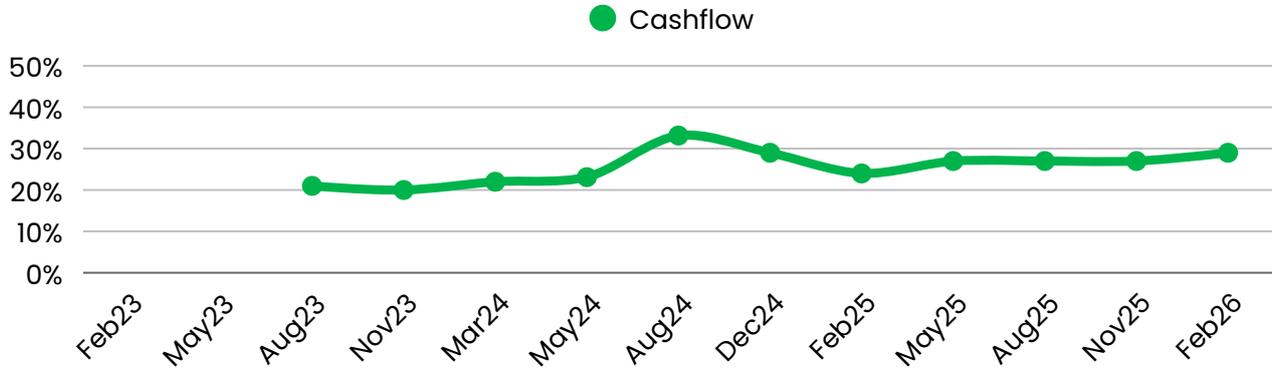
Top issues

In every survey, we ask respondents to select the three biggest concerns for them. The graph below shows the proportion of respondents who listed one of the following issues among their top three concerns.



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What respondents are saying...

What do you think is going well for the local economy?

(mentions → % of all responses)

- 1) Business confidence, optimism & resilience → 21.1%
- 2) Anchor projects & infrastructure (stadium, facilities) → 15.6%
- 3) Construction & housing / new builds → 13.6%
- 3=) Migration, population growth & city attractiveness → 13.6%
- 4) Agriculture & primary industries → 13.1%
- 5) Tourism, hospitality & events → 12.6%

What is going well for your business right now?

(mentions → % of all responses)

- 1) Customer relationships & confidence → 21.2%
 - "Strong customer relationships"
 - "Customer confidence is up so far this year"
- 2) Demand, sales & pipeline → 17.2%
 - "Pipeline and sales are very strong."
 - "Strong demand, strong alignment with government agenda"
- 3) Team, staffing & culture → 15.3%
 - "We have developed a great team which is getting stronger, we are comfortably at 4 carpenters. This number of employees is where we sit most comfortably."
 - "Good team and spending money on marketing helps"
- 4) Exports & international opportunities → 10.3%
 - "Export growth and demand"
 - "Internationalisation trend is positive (can be better)"
- 5) Systems, processes & productivity → 7.9%
 - "IT Systems"
 - "Investment in capital improvements"
- 6) Primary sector tailwinds (agriculture, dairy, rural) → 5.4%
 - "Farming in general is looking good"
 - "Forward orders of farm machinery as farmers as very confident about their future"

... and what this means for the local economy

Combining insights from: “What do you think is going well for the local economy?” and “What is going well for your business right now?”

1) A confidence-led cycle is underway.

Confidence and optimism are the most dominant signals across both questions. Business are reporting strong customer relationships, steady/rebounding pipelines, and generally improved sentiment. This combination usually marks the front end of a positive cycle, where confidence turns into real spending, faster decision-making, and more willingness to progress delayed or discretionary projects.

2) Physical investment is now a major growth engine.

Local responses highlight the impact of stadium developments, city facilities, and construction activity. Business in the second question note growing demand linked to these same sectors. This alignment suggests a multiplier effect: when physical assets come online, events, hospitality, tourism, professional services, and supply chains all lift. Expect this to continue through 2026 as infrastructure activations scale.

3) People inflows are supporting demand – but pressure is rising on infrastructure.

Migration into Christchurch/Selwyn and “place-to-be” appeal show up strongly. Business also reflect the upside: more enquiries, more customers, better team formation, and improved hiring conditions.

The medium-term constraint? Infrastructure capacity (transport, water, housing, health). If delivery lags, the benefit of population growth could soften as congestion, cost pressures, and service strain start to show.

4) The primary sector remains a stabiliser, not the sole growth story.

Rural confidence is solid and still feeds into demand for equipment, servicing, manufacturing, and logistics. But across both questions, the real growth momentum is more diversified: construction, events, services, and export-linked activities are all contributing. This is a healthier, more resilient pattern than previous cycles where agriculture dominated.

5) Capacity & productivity are the swing variables.

Business are signalling both strength and strain in their internal capacity. Team culture and stability are positives, but staffing reliability, process bottlenecks, and throughput limitations are common.

This creates two implications:

- Where demand is rising, execution capacity (skills, retention, middle management depth) could cap revenue, even in a positive environment.
- Business investing in systems, workflow improvements, and tech will absorb demand more efficiently without proportional headcount increases.
- These are the levers that convert confidence into actual output and margin.

6) External markets are an upside lever.

Export and international-opportunity mentions show Canterbury business remain competitive offshore. This injects higher ceilings into the regional economy, but also introduces exposure to FX and global volatility. Business with diversified market mixes will see the strongest benefits.