

A photograph of a construction site. In the foreground, a surveyor wearing a white hard hat, a high-visibility yellow and grey jacket, and a tie is talking on a mobile phone while holding a tablet. To his right is a surveying instrument on a tripod. In the background, another worker in a yellow hard hat and high-visibility vest is visible near a red crane and a building under construction.

Association of Consulting Surveyors (NSW) COVID-19 Member Impact Survey

April 2020

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Introduction

The **Associations Matter 2020 COVID-19 Member Impact Survey** was conducted on behalf of the Association of Consulting Surveyors NSW (ACSNSW) in April 2020. The purpose of the survey was to help ACNSW better understand the impact of COVID-19 on the profession and individual surveyors.

The survey was conducted on behalf of ACSNSW by independent research agency Survey Matters, using a quantitative, online instrument. From a distribution to approximately 250 members, a total of 91 responses were received, equalling a response rate of 36%. The survey also provided several opportunities for respondents to provide free text feedback and to offer ideas and suggestions. Results are provided in aggregate; no individual is identified.

The results indicate that COVID-19 has already impacted the consulting surveyor profession. Seven in 10 respondents indicated that COVID-19 poses a high or very high level of threat to their industry or profession, and 63% believe it threatens their job or business. Many consulting surveyors are dealing with a downturn in business and decrease in workflow, leading to a loss of income. Even so, many believe the full impact of COVID-19 has yet to be felt in the industry, with 48% of respondents still employed but expecting a decrease in their income or hours in the coming months. While a further 23% have already had their income or hours reduced, 13% believe it is too early to know what the impact will be.

Reflecting the anticipated effects on the industry, consulting surveyors would like ACSNSW to keep them up to date with the latest COVID-19 information specific to their industry and profession. There were also calls for clear information about what government support is available to them and how the industry demand is tracking.

To help keep consulting surveyors in business, members want continued advocacy efforts to Government around the professions ability to operate during COVID-19, and to encourage the Government to spend money on infrastructure. Others would like to hear how firms are managing staff, and some suggested online CPD.

Pleasingly, many consulting surveyors who took part in the survey were happy with the support ACS has given to date and wish for this support to continue.

Key Findings

1

Sixty-seven (67%) of consulting surveyors surveyed indicate that COVID-19 poses a high or very high level of threat to their industry or profession.

2

Overwhelmingly, consulting surveyors indicated that a downturn in business and subsequent workflow is having the biggest immediate impact on them to date.

3

Forty-eight percent (48%) of consulting surveyors indicate that they are still employed but are expecting their hours and income to be reduced.

4

Almost a third (31%) of consulting surveyors do not qualify for government support. There were calls for information about the financial support available.

5

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of respondents indicate that clear information about the government support available is how the ACS can assist the profession.

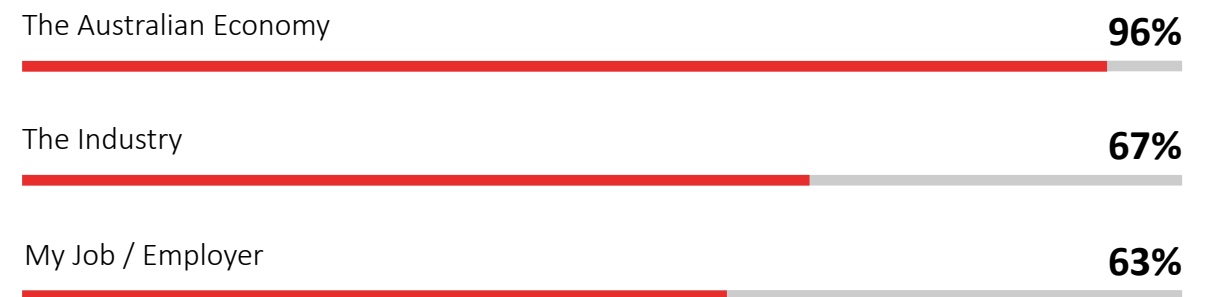
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There were many calls for ACSNSW to keep them up to date with the latest COVID-19 information specific to their industry and profession.





Threat Level of COVID-19

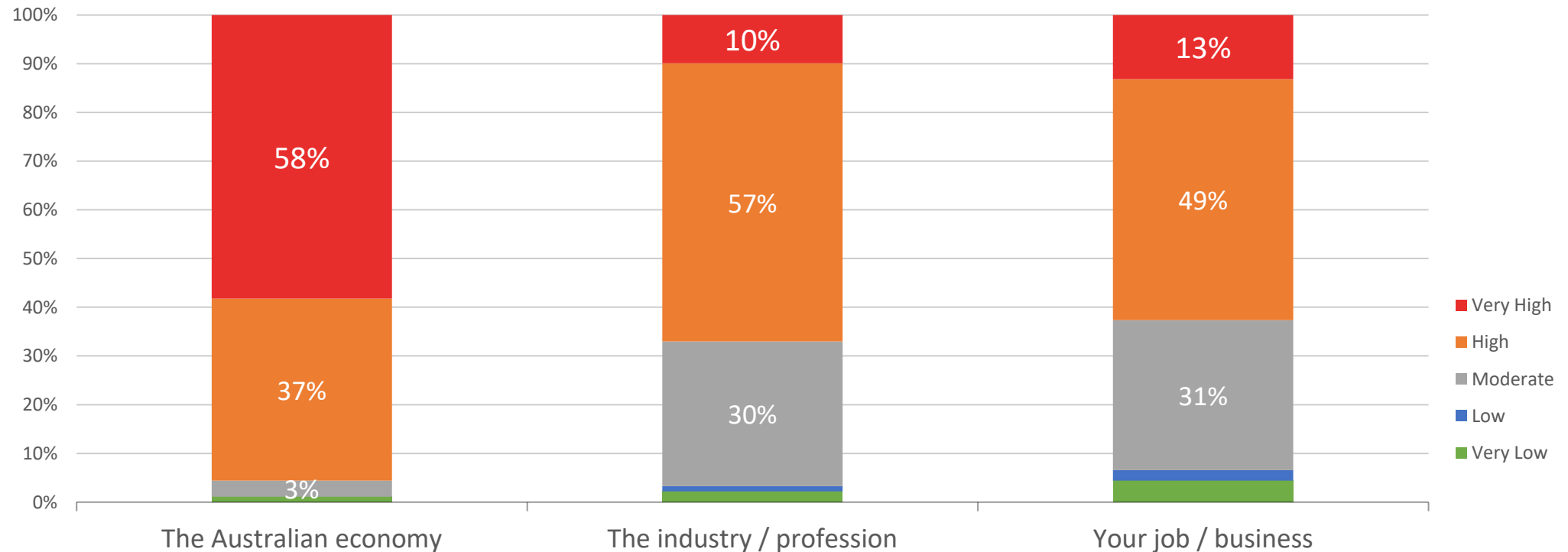


What level of threat do you think COVID-19 poses to:
% High / Very High

Threat Level of COVID-19

What level of threat do you think COVID-19 poses to:

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of respondents believe that COVID-19 poses a high or very high threat to their industry or profession, and 63% are concerned the threat to their business or job is high or very high.



Verbatim

Immediate Business Impacts

Downturn in business is the number one impact on consulting surveyors.

Overwhelmingly, the consulting surveyors who responded to the survey indicated that a downturn in business is having the biggest immediate impact on them to date. Comments suggest that enquires for new business has “virtually disappeared”, and many projects have been “placed on hold or cancelled, with access to sites limited.” Additionally, many surveyors feel work has slowed due to uncertainty in the future and the general slow in the economy.



Downturn in business and decreased workflow

“The economy drop has made developers delay most new projects. Clients are not willing to start anything at the moment due to the large amount of uncertainty in regard to the economy.”



Changes to office and site practice

“Implementing new systems to enable off-site working for our office staff.”



Working from home / managing staff remotely

“Managing staff from isolation. Finding ways to work and communicate without being in the office has been a big hurdle and is taking a bit of adjustment for some staff more than others.”



Ability to provide services in usual manner

“Impact on ability to perform fieldwork - more than one person in a crew travelling and working together is a significant risk, even with precautions taken.”

Thinking about the COVID-19 situation, what has been the biggest impact on you or your business to date?



Developers are too cautious about releasing funds to commence new projects given potential uncertain returns.



01.

“We are in a region that has been hit by drought, then bushfire, then flood and now COVID-19. The culmination of these events has been a 50% downturn in business over the last 6 months, and in the current climate of uncertainty, I cannot see that improving.”

02.

“There seems to be a down turn in the number of new projects starting due to decrease in job and employment opportunities caused directly by the virus (closing the borders, travel, social distancing), but these are the only measures we have to effectively fight against it.”

03.

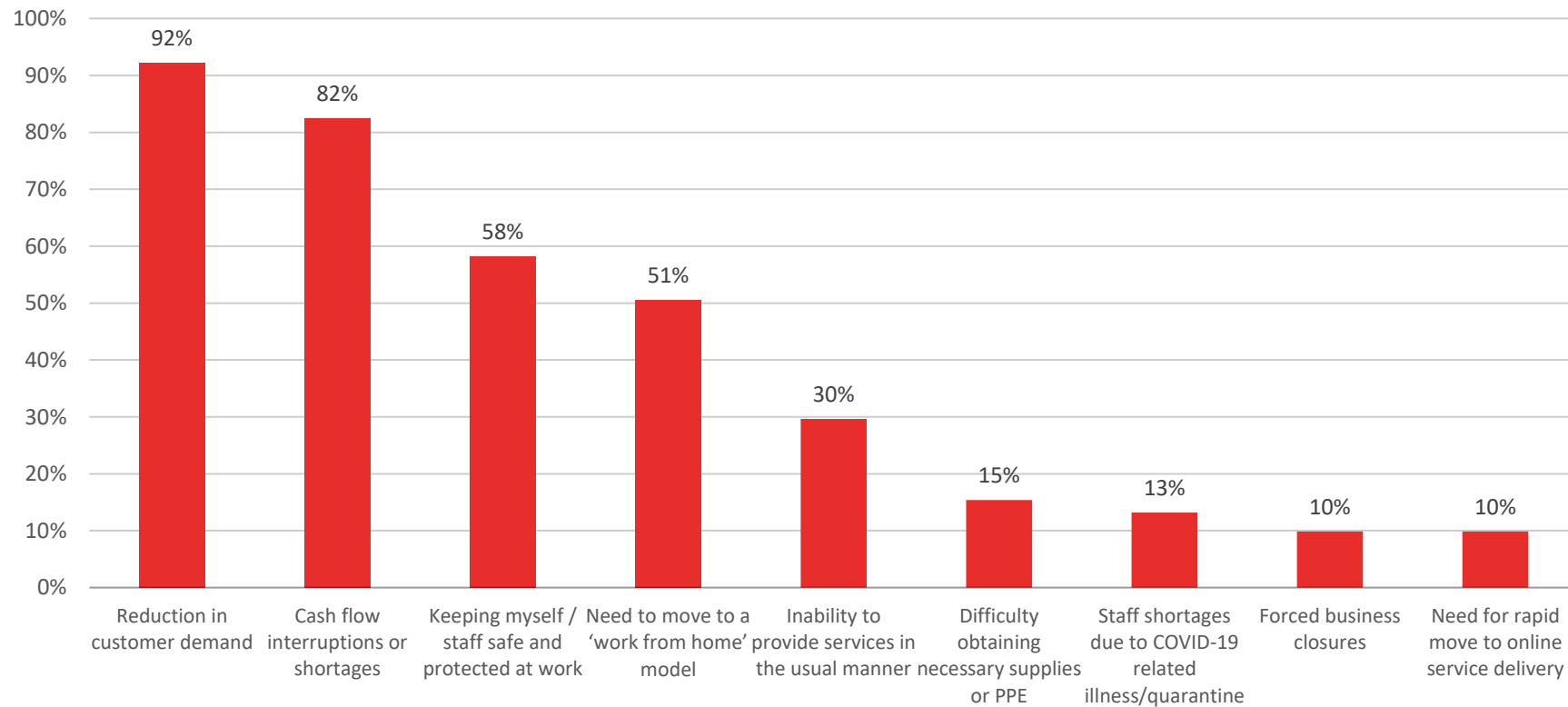
“Reduction in private projects. Government and council work still coming through, but private projects are on hold. Reduction in work will impact the need for staff.”



“Generally slowing economy, we expect a significant downturn in about 3-4 weeks when existing orders are finished. Builders that have preexisting orders that can now commence due to registration of subdivisions.

However, without new purchases of land over the next month onwards there will be no new starts. So we expect the downturn to be delayed by a month or two and then hit pretty hard.”

Expected Impacts of COVID-19

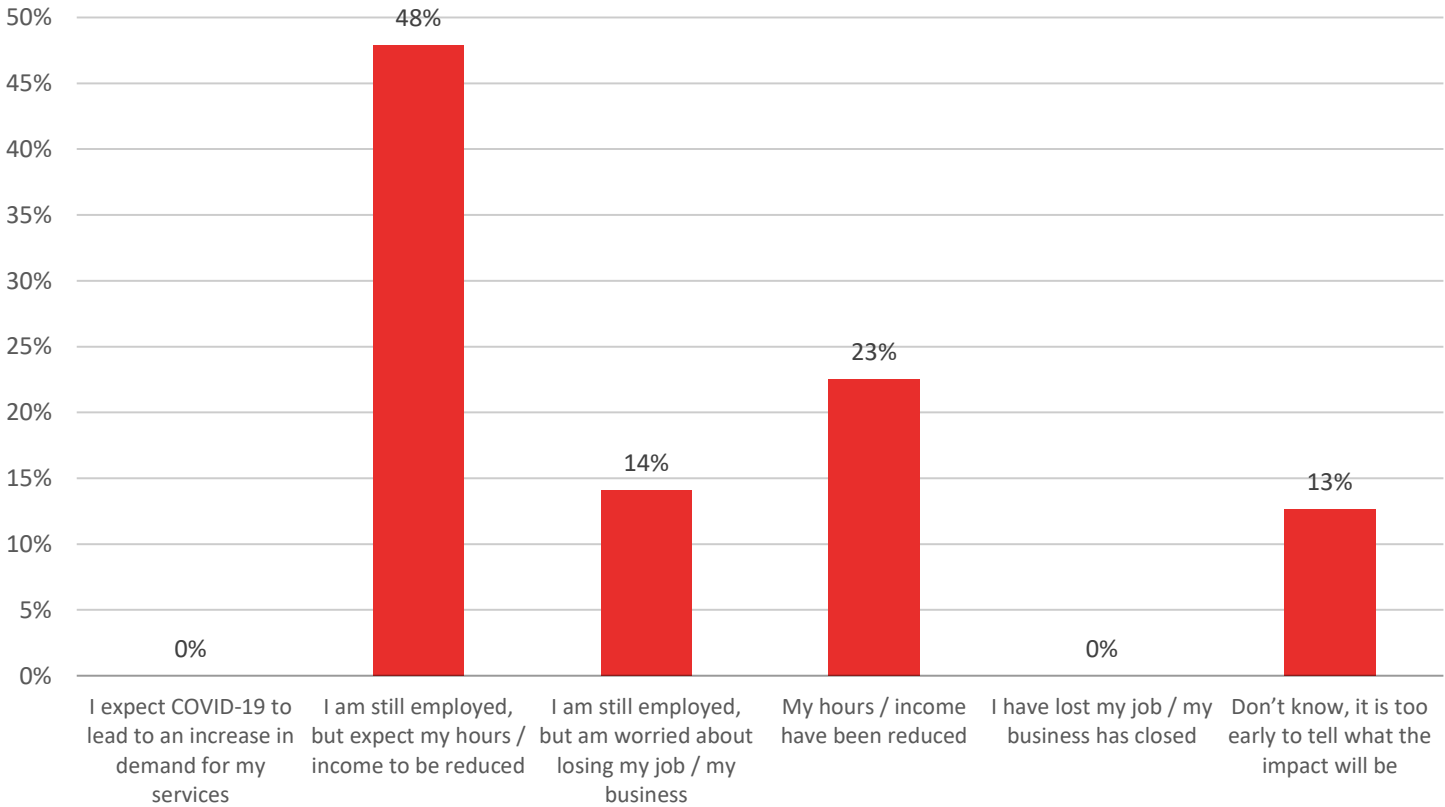


Further reduction in customer demand is widely anticipated over the next three months

Ninety-two percent (92%) of consulting surveyors who participated expect that COVID-19 will lead to a reduction in customer demand for their business or employer in the coming 3 months. A further 82% predict they will also experience cash flow interruptions or shortages.

How do you expect that COVID-19 will impact your business / employer over the coming 3 months?

Personal Impacts on Consulting Surveyors

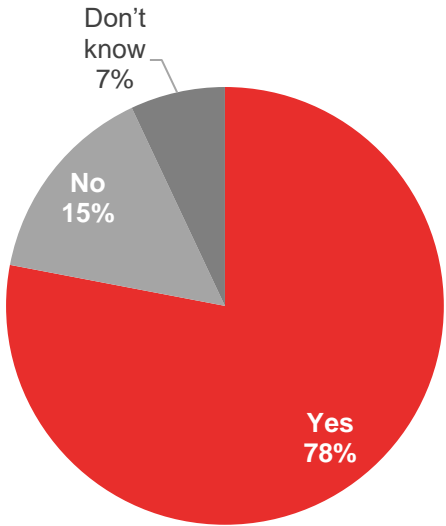


Which of the following best describes the impact of COVID-19 on your income and employment?

Predicting reduced hours and income

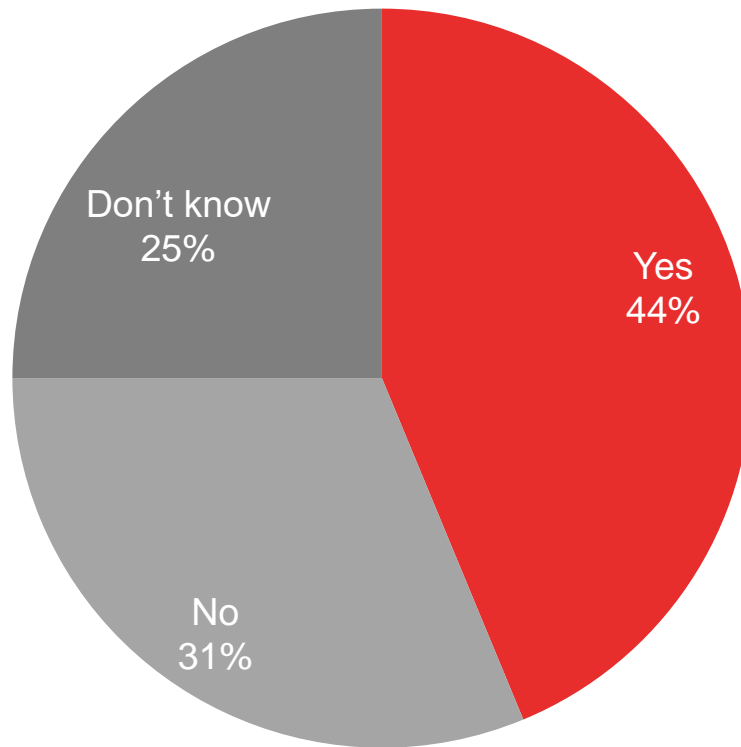
Seventy-eight percent of consulting surveyors expect COVID-19 will impact their personal income and employment.

Almost half (48%) indicated they are still employed but expect their hours and income will be reduced. A further 23% have already had their hours or income reduced by COVID-19.



Do you expect that COVID-19 will have an impact on your personal income and employment?

Access to Government Support



Do you qualify for any government support?

*Interpret with caution due to small sample, n=16

Many consulting surveyors do not qualify for government support

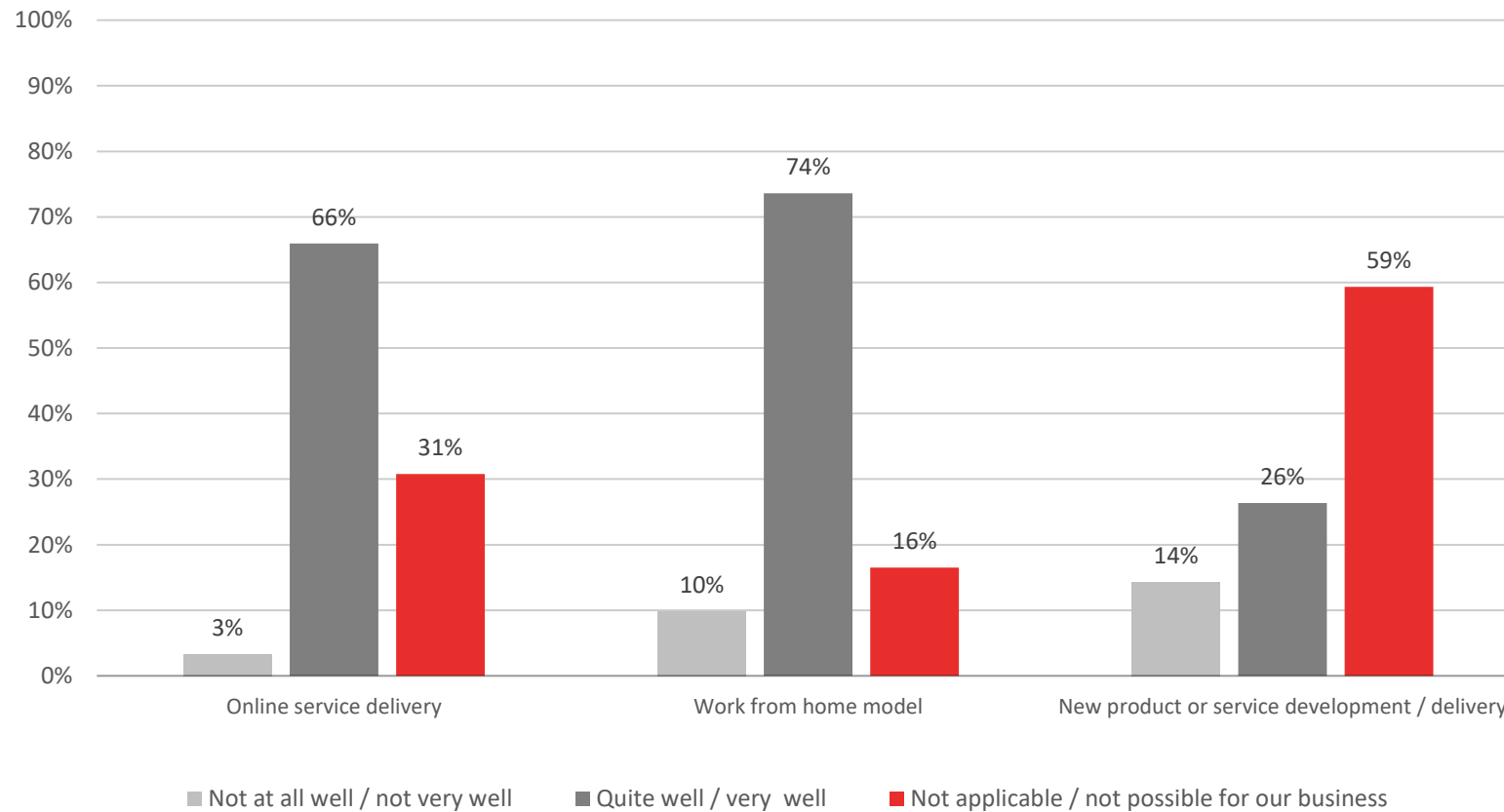
Whilst these results must be viewed with caution due to a small sample size (n=16), 44% of respondents who have had their hours or income reduced qualify for government support, and a quarter (25%) are unsure if they qualify. Further, almost a third (31%) of those who need government support do not qualify.



My income has not changed yet- but I can see that it may in the future. I would like to know how we access the \$1500 for workers ASAP because they are getting nervous.

Professional

Impacts on work service delivery



Adapting well to working from home

Almost three quarters (74%) of consulting surveyors have transitioned quite or very well to the working from home model. Sixty-six (66%) percent have transitioned quite well or very well to online service delivery. In line with the free text, most consulting surveyors are struggling with new service delivery, with 59% stating it is not applicable or possible for their business.

So far, how well is your business / employer managing the transition to...



“Every business is managing things in their own way. Hearing about some of the ways other firms are managing staff, output etc. will be helpful. Even if it is just to give us confidence our methods are on the right track.”

ACSNSW Assistance with COVID-19 Impacts

Keep us up to date!

Consulting surveyors indicated that they want the ACS to keep them up to date with the latest COVID-19 information specific to their industry and profession. Further to this, many expressed the need for the ACS to keep them informed about what government support is available to them and how the industry demand is tracking.

Reflecting a need for government assistance, members would also like ACSNSW to continue their advocacy efforts to Government around the professions ability to operate during COVID-19. Other called for the encouragement of Government to spend money on infrastructure.

Others would like to hear how firms are managing staff, and access to online CPD.

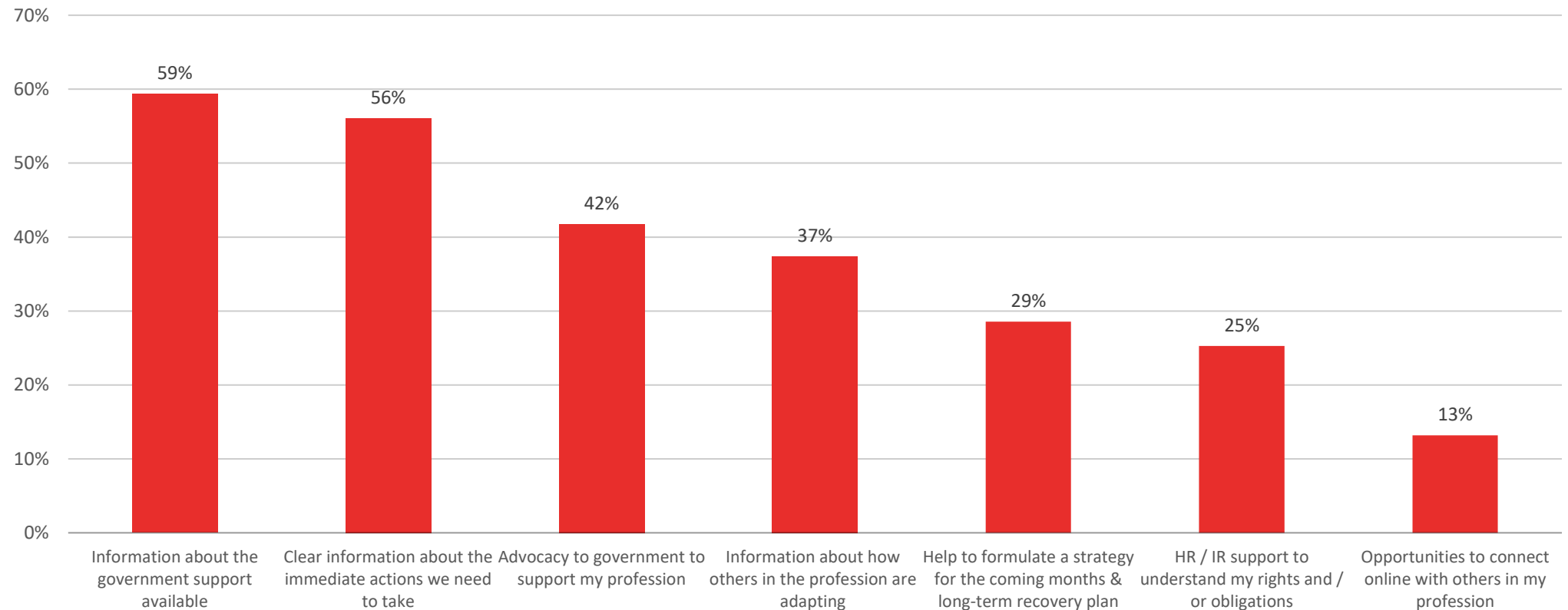
Pleasingly, many consulting surveyors who took part in the survey were happy with the support ACS has given to date and wish for this support to continue.

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Encouragement, initiatives to assist in dealing with changing working environments and outputs, providing regular information from authorities and associated legislation changes associated with the virus.

Assistance with COVID-19 Impacts



Right now, what is the best type of support ACSNSW could provide to help you deal with the impacts of COVID-19?

Assistance with COVID-19 Impacts

	%	Number of Responses
Information about the government support available	59%	54
Clear information about the immediate actions members of our profession need to take	56%	51
Advocacy to government to support my profession	42%	38
Information about how others in the profession are adapting to the changing requirements	37%	34
Help to formulate a strategy for the coming months, as well as a long-term recovery plan	29%	26
HR / IR support to understand my rights and / or obligations	25%	23
Opportunities to connect online with others in my profession	13%	12
Help with financial planning	4%	4
Technical tools and support to move our services online	3%	3
Support for obtaining sufficient personal protective equipment and supplies	1%	1
Other	2%	2

Right now, what is the best type of support ACSNSW could provide to help you deal with the impacts of COVID-19?

Verbatim

How can **ACSNSW** help?



Keep members informed

“Keeping us up to date on COVID-19 information specific to our industry and profession.”



Advocacy to Government

“Maintain strong advocacy to Government around the professions ability to operate through this situations with the right protective procedures in place.”



Help with Government Support


“Kept up to date on what financial support might be available from Government and on workplace compliance.”



Keep Up the Good Work

“Your efforts so far have been most helpful. The rapid & informative updates are fantastic for keeping us informed.”



A construction site under a clear blue sky. In the foreground, a surveyor wearing a white hard hat, a high-visibility yellow and grey jacket, and grey trousers stands on a pile of brown earth. He is holding a mobile phone to his ear with his right hand and a tablet computer in his left. A surveying tripod with a level is set up in front of him. In the background, a large red tower crane is visible, along with the skeletal structure of a building under construction. To the right, another worker in a yellow hard hat and high-visibility vest stands near a red and white surveying marker.

“Information is the key and access to decision makers. Development needs to be encouraged, nurtured and assisted as a major driver of our economy.”

Verbatim

What others are doing.

Working From Home

“We were already set up to work from home and so that has been a seamless process.”

“Standard working from home practices.”

“Create separate areas, work from home and work to ensure some of your business is still active in case of infection.”

Moved meetings & CPD Online

“Friday afternoon virtual drinks. Regular online team meetings.”

“CPD webinar like opportunities could be arranged via zoom or similar.”

“Undertaking all correspondence with off-site staff through skype or similar rather than telephone.”

Precautionary Measures

“We are using Infrared thermometer to check office staff temperatures when they arrive at work.”

“Usual separation requirements and personal hygiene methods.”

“Just normally staff meetings to remind everyone about distancing, hand washing etc. notices/posters around office.”

Business as usual

“We haven't had to make any large changes at this time.”

“None really. Just maintaining business as usual. Communicating with staff to ensure they are happy to work in the present conditions.”

“No, not at this stage. It has been very much business as usual for us.”

About

Survey Matters

Survey Matters specialise in providing services to associations and not for profit organisations, their customers and members.

Survey Matters have helped a wide range of associations understand their value proposition - what is important to members, how the association can help them and how satisfied they are with their associations' performance.

We also work with associations to generate and build industry data and knowledge to support advocacy, promotion, industry development and marketing activities.

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