

Pathways to Successful SMEs – Presentation & Workshop

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The project

What?

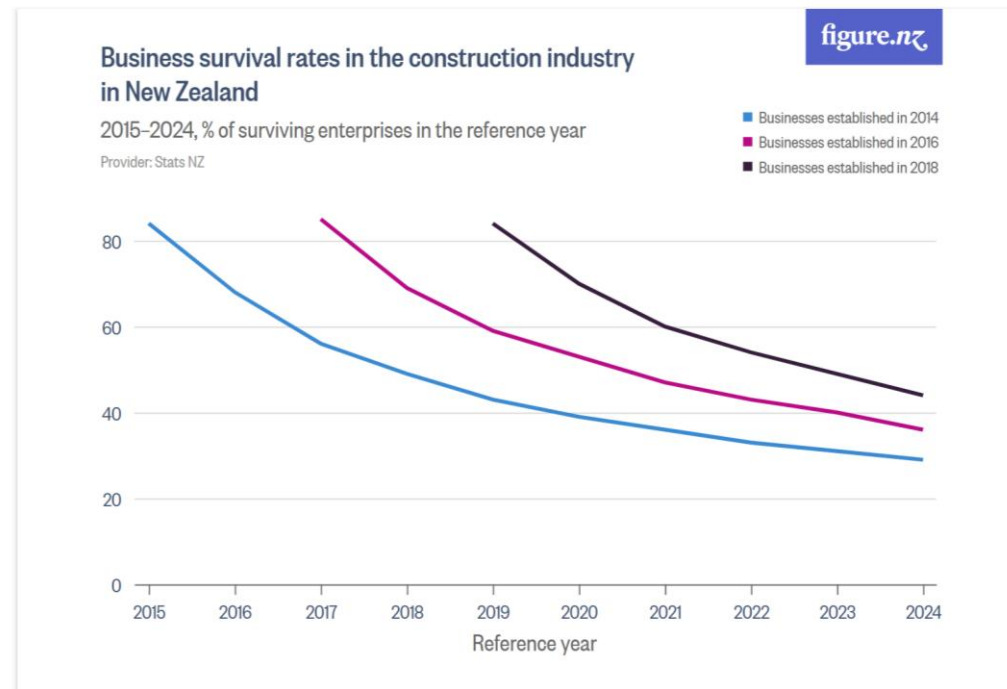
- Purpose: share findings, test recommendations, gather feedback
- Based on key informant engagement and literature review

Why?

- High SME failure rates in NZ construction & infrastructure
- Many tradespeople have strong technical skills but lack business skills
- Industry impact: stability, quality, workforce retention

Industry context – key stats

- Construction = 6.3% GDP, 10.7% of workforce (MBIE, 2023)
- Only 29% of construction businesses from 2014 still operating in 2023
- Over 1/3 of new builds fail final inspection (OneRoof, 2025)
- Mental health: 7% of working-age male suicides in construction (BRANZ)



Stakeholder narratives - summary

1. Why SMEs fail: cultural norms, poor cashflow/pricing, boom-bust unpreparedness
2. VET's role: teach business/people management pre-business ownership
3. Skills gaps: pricing, PM, compliance, awareness
4. German Meister parallels: business credentialing, teaching authority
5. Minimum business requirements: licensing, readiness checks

Recommendations

- VET recommendations

- Stackable micro-credentials towards higher trade qualification: technical expertise, business knowledge, teaching/mentorship
- Optional business strand in apprenticeships
- Trade-specific content to fill current VET gaps

- Non-education recommendations

- Business-readiness licensing model
- Mandatory tax literacy module before GST registration

- Call to action

- Help refine recommendations for sector fit
- Identify potential pilot opportunities
- Partner to implement solutions

Workshop

Gather targeted feedback to refine recommendations and test feasibility

1. Quick vote: rank top 3 recommendations
2. Breakout discussions: priorities, barriers, risks, connections
3. Report back: share themes with whole group