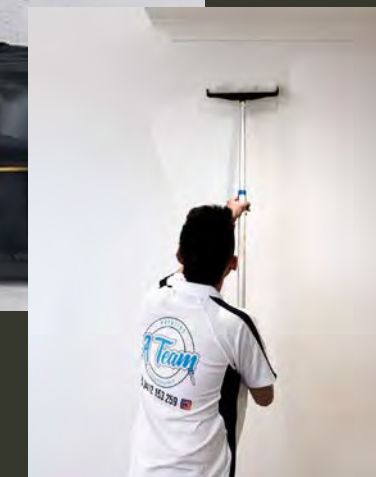


# FUTURE TRADIE REPORT

A snapshot of the behaviours and beliefs of the new generation of Australian trades, and what they need to succeed.



# Contents

## 03

### Introduction

What is the Future Tradie Report?	03
What is in the report?	04
Who created the report?	05
Methodology	06
Who we heard from	07
The Future Tradie Landscape	08
Forces, Themes & Mindsets overview	09

## 116

### Interviewees & experts

Interviewee profiles	117
Expert acknowledgements	121

## 13

### Themes

Limitless Learning	14
Values Reboot	37
Sustainable Building	59
Tradie Hospitality	76
Magnetic Culture	93

## 122

### Unlocking opportunity

What now?	122
-----------	-----

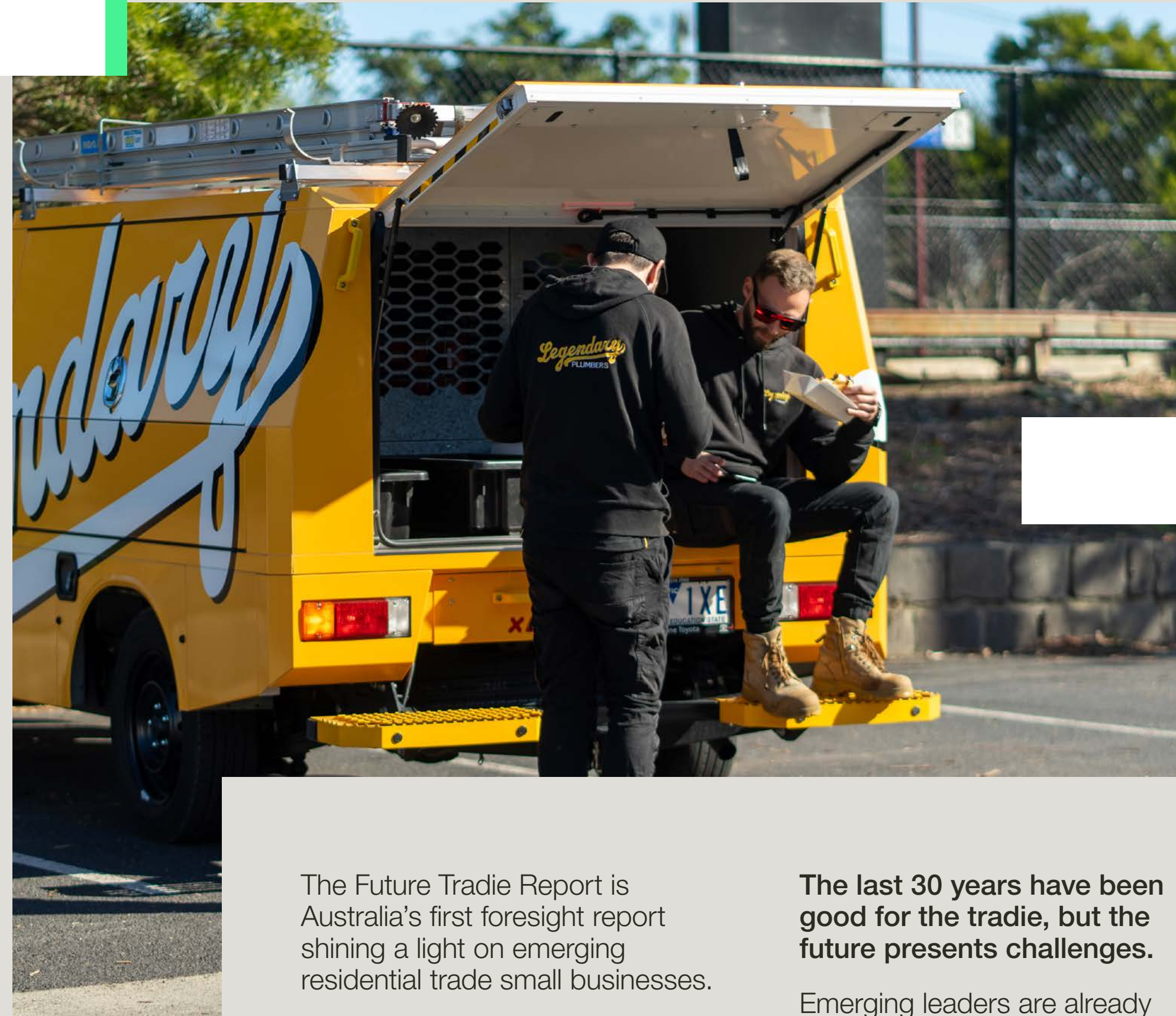
## 111

### Mindsets

Business Optimiser	112
Niche Specialist	113
Service Steward	114
Culture Leader	115

# What is the Future Tradie Report?

Like us, you are no doubt looking ahead to **what's next** for Australia's trades and construction industries.



LEGENDARY PLUMBERS

The Future Tradie Report is Australia's first foresight report shining a light on emerging residential trade small businesses.

The report is informed by a dedicated research study that deep-dives into tradies' values, ambitions and hurdles – forecasting tomorrow by speaking with the change-makers of today.

The report backs up their beliefs, behaviours and visions of the future with data gathered from over 1000 tradespeople, to create a clear viewpoint of the next five years.

**The last 30 years have been good for the tradie, but the future presents challenges.**

Emerging leaders are already anticipating these challenges. We've combined their experience with a broad data set, that signposts industry shifts and can be used to guide decision-making.

# What is in the report?



HUMAN ELECTRIC DESIGN

## 16

emerging residential trade business leaders & experts provide insights

## 5 THEMES

shaping the future

## 1071

surveyed tradespeople provided data via a 30-question survey

## 4 MINDSETS

showing how emerging leaders think, act & work

## 6 FORCES

influencing the industry

## 45 OPPORTUNITIES

for industry to support small businesses

# Who created the report?

**Future opportunities don't just happen.**

They happen because businesses understand their purpose, their advantage and their customers. They dedicate focus to the opportunity that makes the most sense to them.

Trout, Next and Superseed specialise in helping businesses bring new opportunities to life, through creativity, innovation pilots and ventures.

To develop your brand, pilot a new product or service, or for ventures expertise, reach out to our team leaders:

[catch@trout.com.au](mailto:catch@trout.com.au)



## TROUT

Trout is Australia's leading brand and creative agency, specialising in the home, construction and built environment sectors.

[trout.com.au](http://trout.com.au)



## next+

Next is Australia's leading innovation consultancy focused on trades and the built environment.

[thisisnext.com.au](http://thisisnext.com.au)



## SUPERSEED

Superseed Ventures is a venture capital fund transforming the way tradies work by investing, scaling and building trade tech startups.

[superseed.ventures](http://superseed.ventures)

## Corporate partners

The Future Tradie Report has been put together in collaboration with our corporate partners. These businesses understand the best way to support tradies is to anticipate what's coming.



# Methodology

The Future Tradie Report combines **primary, secondary and tertiary** sources.

We started out with desktop research, looking at reliable news sources, government statistical data, and industry reporting to understand the forces at play.

Then, we carried out in-depth interviews with Australia's emerging residential trade business leaders.

With the support of our partners, we distributed an in-depth survey, where we heard from over 1,000 tradespeople across the country.

We analysed everything we had gathered, to define the themes, insights and opportunities shaping the future.

Finally, we crafted four mindsets that represent the future-focused tradie.



Data sources include:

Desktop research, public data analysis, and conversations with trade-adjacent professionals

## 1071

Australian tradespeople completing a 30-question survey

## 13

60 minute interviews with emerging residential trades leaders

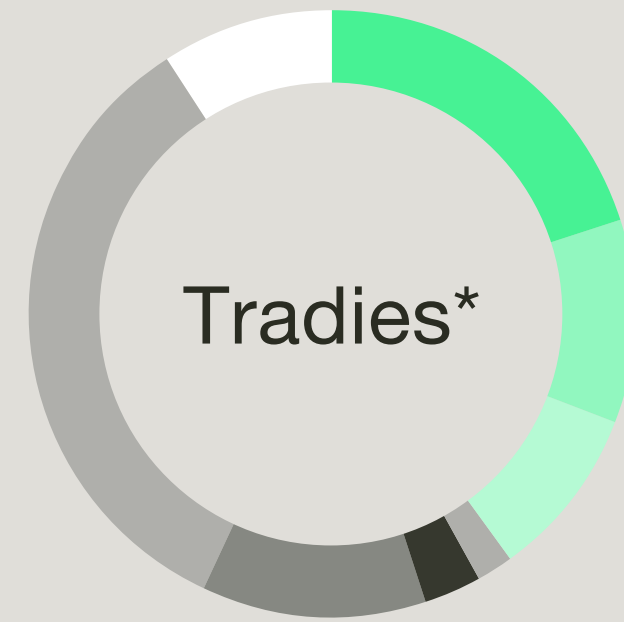
## 3

60 minute interviews with trades business experts

RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED  
AUGUST - NOVEMBER 2023

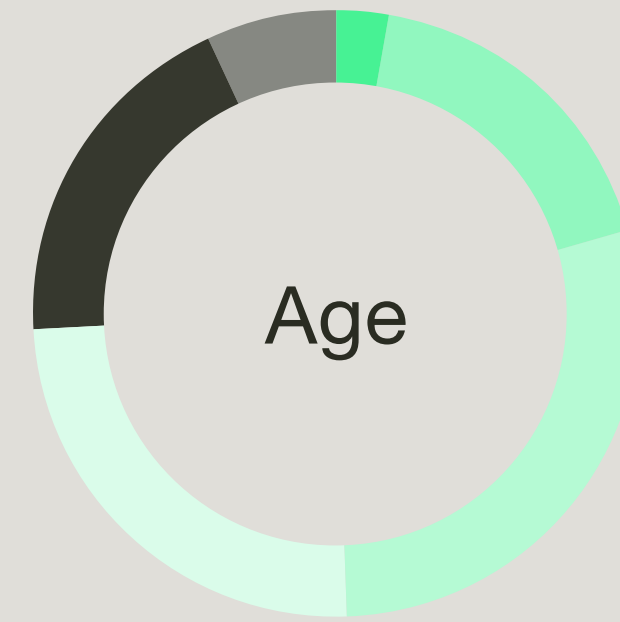
# Who we heard from

1,071 tradies responded to our survey.

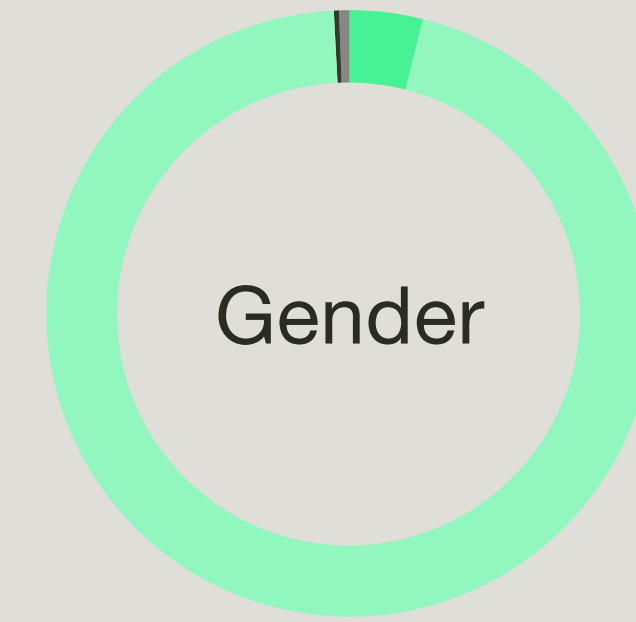


Trade	Count	%
Builder	253	20
Carpenter	134	11
Electrician	107	9
HVAC	22	2
Plasterer	38	3
Painter	151	12
Plumber	428	34
Other	114	9

\*SOME RESPONDENTS SELECTED MORE THAN ONE TRADE



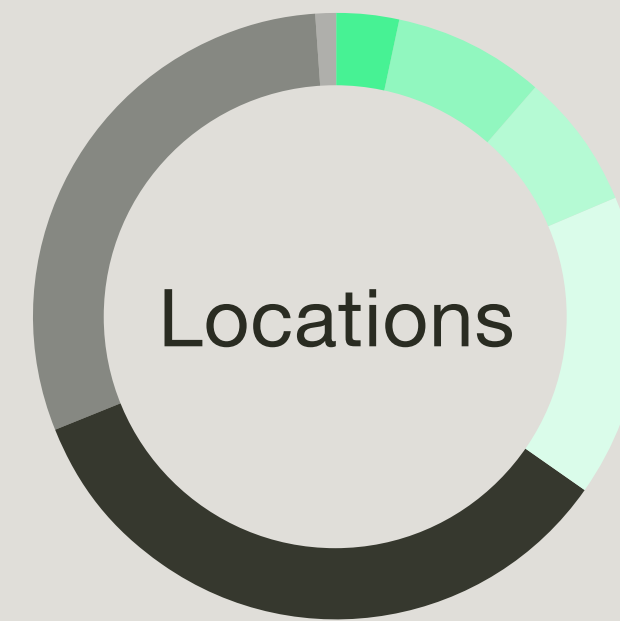
Age	Count	%
18 – 24	28	3
25 – 34	192	18
35 – 44	306	29
45 – 54	266	25
55 – 64	206	19
65+	73	7



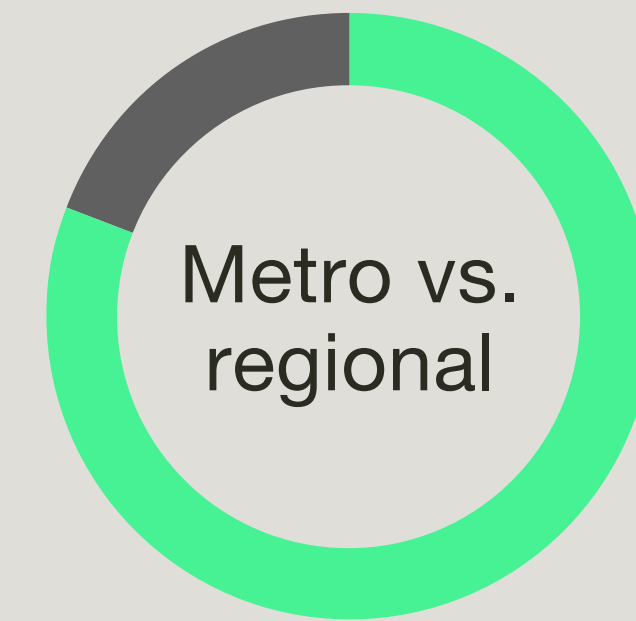
Gender	Count	%
Female	43	4
Male	1020	95
Non-binary	3	0.3
Rather not say	5	0.5



(N/Y)	Count	%
No	184	17
Yes	887	83



Location	%
TAS	3
WA	8
SA	7
QLD	16
VIC	34
NSW / ACT	30
NT	1



Metro vs. regional	%
Metro	81
Regional	19

# The Future Tradie Landscape

For over 30 years, Australia has been a nation of tradies.

In 2022, 18% of registered small businesses were construction and trades businesses. That's 800,000 small business leaders who back their teams to build, maintain, and renovate, every day.

**In 2024, it's a different story.**

The collapse of construction companies has jumped by 28% year-on-year. The cost of doing business has skyrocketed, the labour market is tough and more apprentices drop out each quarter than qualify.

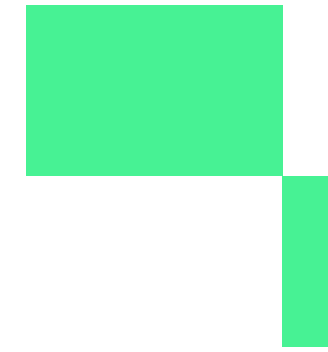
CREDITORWATCH, CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY  
INSOLVENCIES, SEPT-DEC 2022 VS. SEPT-DEC 2023

New infrastructure and development is constantly planned for our communities but there are challenges when executing.

**Tradies are the solution. But the she'll be right attitude that got us here, won't get us there.**



LEGENDARY PLUMBERS



A TEAM PAINTING PROFESSIONALS

In ten years' time, by 2034, thousands of baby boomer tradies will have retired.

Gen X will be coming to the final years of their working lives. Millennials and Gen Z will fill 75% of all jobs in the market. They will be the business leaders and entrepreneurs, shaking up how businesses run.

Some tradies are already leading businesses in new ways, making big bets by reimagining on-the-job culture, or doubling-down on niche skills and services.

The future tradie landscape looks at how today's progressive leaders are responding to forces. Their behaviours are early indicators of what will become the standard business practices of tomorrow.



# Shaping the Future Tradie Landscape

Forces put pressure on tradies who respond in different ways.  
How they respond creates themes within the industry and new tradie mindsets.

## Forces

Forces are inescapable. They are the big factors that change how tradies work, often for the long run.

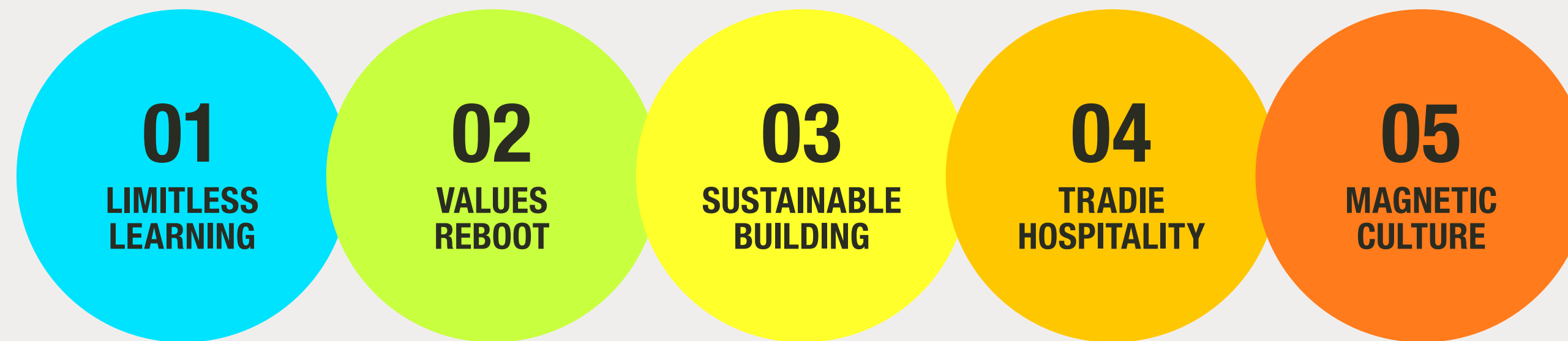
Tradies respond to forces differently, depending on what matters to them and where they see their business going.



## Themes

A theme is a pattern or movement that is taking shape in the industry.

When trades' small business leaders respond to forces in the same way, we see a theme begin to emerge.



## Mindsets

A mindset is how a tradie thinks, works and approaches challenges in the industry.

Mindsets are expressions of personal and business values. Some tradies fall very distinctly into one mindset. Others adopt different mindsets depending on their current business goals, or what they are doing that day.




**OPPORTUNITIES**  
An opportunity is a path of action an organisation or small business could take, to win.

# Six forces impacting how tradies do business

## Forces are felt by all of us.


Throughout the report, we've referenced forces within each theme.



**ECONOMIC**  
The cost of homes, goods, services, and simply doing business, plus movements around who has money to spend and how they spend it.



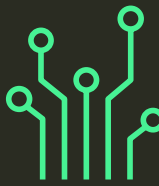
**LEGISLATIVE**  
Government mandates and targets, changes to building codes and practices, and any legislation that tradies need to meet.




**POPULATION**  
How many people are living in Australia, their backgrounds, cultures and ages, and where and how they live, which influences what we build.



**CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY**  
How climate change will impact how and what we build.



**TECHNOLOGY**  
How technologies, tools, communication and automation change how we live and work.



**ROLE OF WORK**  
When, where and how people work, including shifting employee expectations around flexibility, reward and recognition.

# Five themes shaping the future

A theme is a pattern or movement that is taking shape in the industry.

When trades small business leaders respond to forces in the same way, we see a theme begin to emerge.

01

## LIMITLESS LEARNING

Learning a trade is vastly different to learning how to run a successful business.

Business coaches, specialist partners, AI, social networks and adjacent industries all play a part in helping tradies get ahead.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS THEME ON PAGE 14](#)

02

## VALUES REBOOT

The future tradie needs to excel in resilience, integrity, adaptability, professionalism, dedication and empathy.

Trust, focus and respect help them to navigate change and to connect with those from different generations and backgrounds.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS THEME ON PAGE 37](#)

03

## SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

Tradespeople know they need to build sustainably and want pocket-friendly, practical solutions.

Adapting existing properties, reducing energy consumption and waste, and advising homeowners about making good choices are part of the job. Builders especially think in 30+ year timeframes, not 10-year warranties.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS THEME ON PAGE 59](#)

04

## TRADIE HOSPITALITY

Next gen maintenance trades are polished professional service providers. They develop lifelong relationships with clients who value care and hospitality.

Reputation is everything, making every client interaction count.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS THEME ON PAGE 76](#)

05

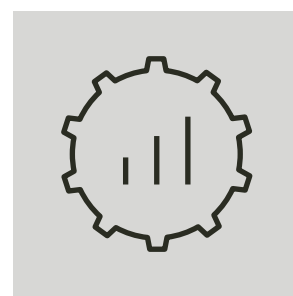
## MAGNETIC CULTURE

Creating a positive team culture and helping people grow is the most important aspect of gaining valuable team members.

Sharing their business culture on social media means the pick of the labour market proactively comes to them.

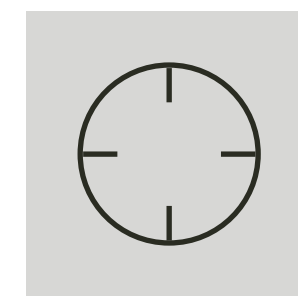
[LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS THEME ON PAGE 93](#)

# Four mindsets show how future leaders think, act and work



## BUSINESS OPTIMISER

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS MINDSET ON PAGE 112



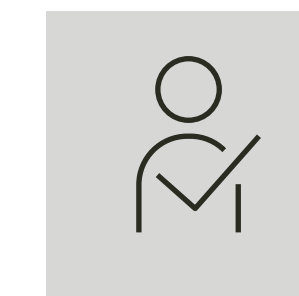
## NICHE SPECIALIST

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS MINDSET ON PAGE 113



## SERVICE STEWARD

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS MINDSET ON PAGE 114



## CULTURE LEADER

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS MINDSET ON PAGE 115

**Ambitious trade business leaders who prioritise upskilling in business knowledge, not necessarily their trade.**

They are driven by business performance, metrics, efficiency and operational expertise from outside the sector, so they can scale, or manage their business from afar.

**Self-educating trade business leaders who are becoming experts in a niche.**

They are led by their passion for a specific area, or where they think legislation and client demands are going next – think sustainability, electric battery charging, or climate resilient houses.

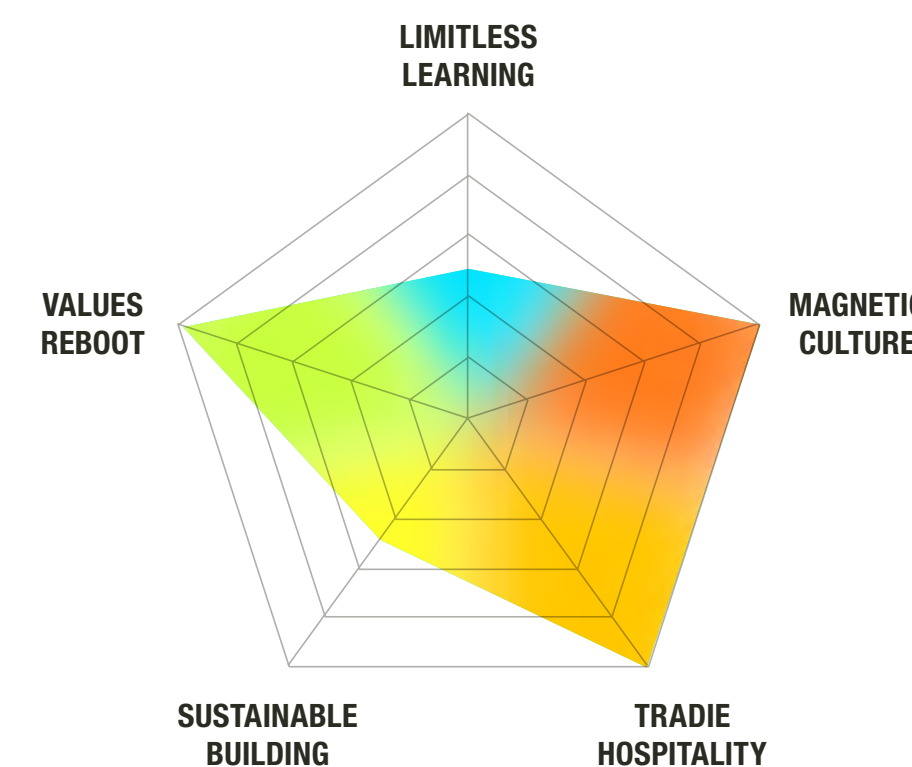
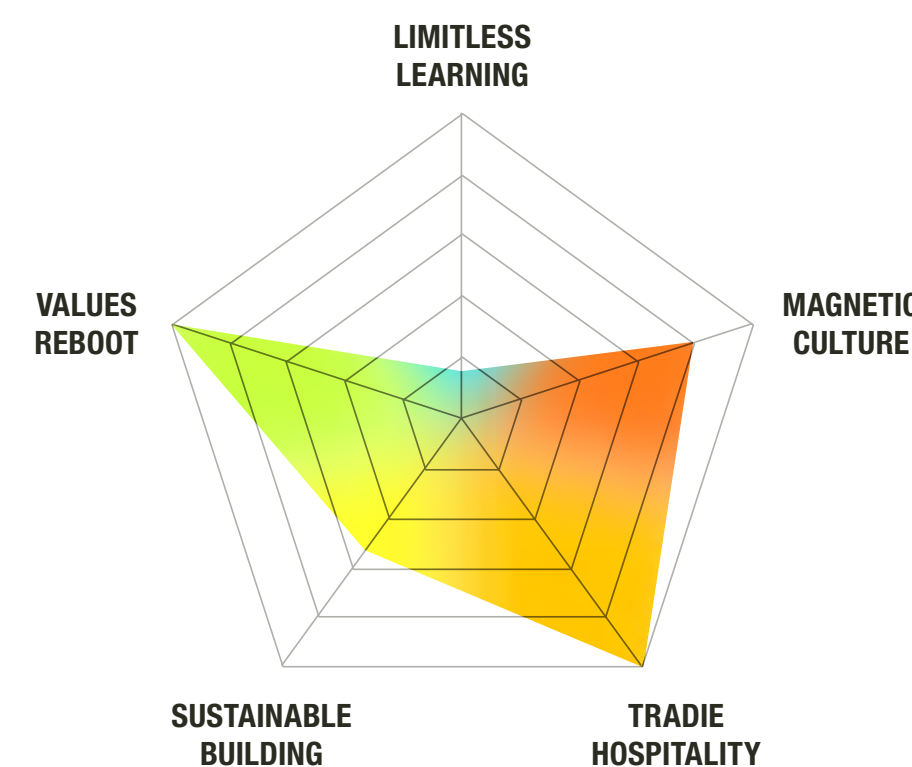
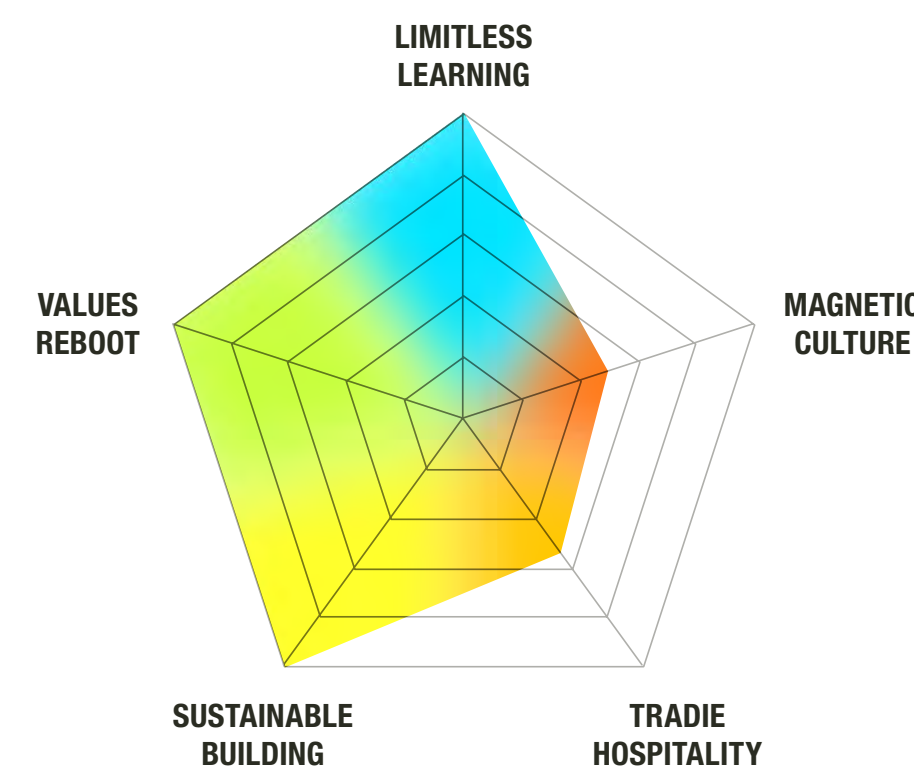
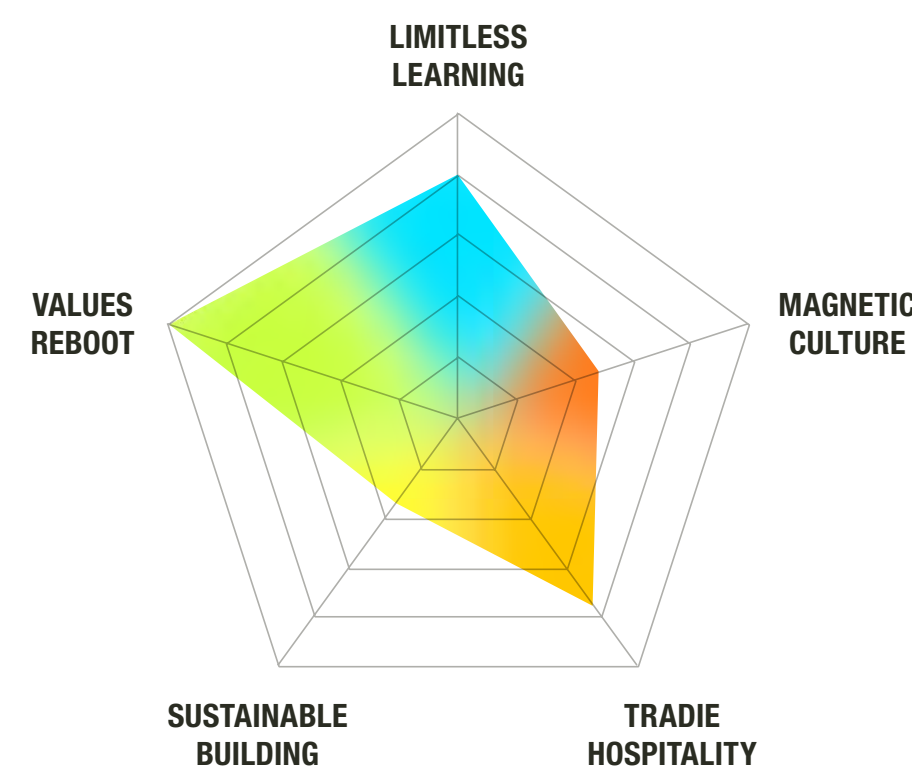
**Trade business leaders who take pride in maintenance, service and unmatched hospitality.**

They do polished in-home jobs and build life-long relationships with clients. Clients trust them with the care of their homes and share stand-out experiences with others in the neighbourhood.

**People-focused trade business leaders who are fixing the industry's cultural challenges and building positive, vulnerable culture.**

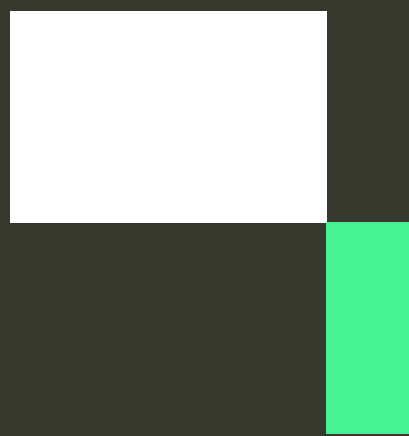
They go the extra mile to support mental health, inclusion, and professional development, on a small local scale and in industry-wide activity.

### Themes they care about



# THEMES

Five themes shaping the future of the residential trade industries.



# 01

# LIMITLESS LEARNING

Learning a trade is vastly different to learning how to run a successful business.

Business coaches, specialist partners, AI, social networks and adjacent industries all play a part in helping tradies get ahead.



EVOBUILT

# Limitless learning summary

## WHAT IT IS

Learning a trade is vastly different to learning how to run a successful business.

Business coaches, specialist partners, AI, social networks and adjacent industries all play a part in helping tradies get ahead.

## WHAT'S DRIVING IT

- The knowledge gap between what you learn to do in your trade vs. what you need to know to run a successful business
- Tradies looking outside of their own industries to parallel industries & overseas for business innovation
- Mindset shift away from "tall poppy syndrome" and keeping secrets, to pride in success and sharing info
- Access to AI, software, specialist partners and social networks
- Passionate tradies looking for new solutions for emerging niches, eg. passive housing
- Business coaching as an exit strategy from running a small business

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Reduced time from setting-up to being profitable
- Improved day-to-day efficiency & client experience
- Learning from other's experiences instead of making mistakes yourself
- Monetising expertise as an exit strategy



IMAGE: ROBBY KRUYER, EVOBUILT

## THE FUTURE TRADIE

Uses a business coach to monitor business growth, guide their focus and keep them accountable to goals.

Connects with likeminded tradies, locally and globally, on 3+ platforms (Reddit, TikTok, Instagram...).

Takes pride in the success they have achieved and how they got there.

Connects with others to share knowledge, so everyone can do great work and win at business.

Accesses learning via webinars, podcasts and virtual demonstrations, to save time but still get the info they need.

Checks their business' metrics and dashboards regularly.

Automates job communications between their team members, other trade partners and clients.

Works with 3+ specialists and software platforms to uplift various parts of their process and client experience.

Thinks about how they will exit their business at the start.

Considers business coaching for other tradies as an additional revenue stream or exit strategy.

# What is limitless learning?

Learning a trade is vastly different to learning to run a **successful business.**

While skills-based education is offered via TAFEs, apprenticeships and professional training, there isn't an adjacent pathway to developing your business nous.

A generation that's grown up teaching themselves how to do things on YouTube is using crowdsourced knowledge and ever-expanding networks to learn how to run a company.

Business "secrets" are being revealed and challenges are an opportunity for collaboration. Connecting with multiple external people a day for advice, as part of a virtual community, is the new norm.

Those jumping ahead are looking to global business case studies and using tech like ChatGPT to free up their time, so they can get onto solving the real challenges.

Those who have knowledge are keen to share success stories, how they got there, and what to avoid, to better the industry and help others on their journey.



PLUMBIFY

## 49%

of surveyed tradies under 35YO want to **start their own business** in the next five years.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023



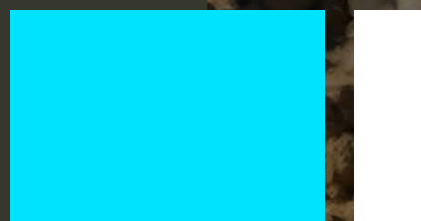
HOW COULD INDUSTRY BODIES  
SUPPORT YOU BETTER?



Better quality learning material, foster more knowledge groups and industry connections in an online environment.

Carpenter, male  
25-34YO  
Canberra, ACT

FUTURE TRADIE SURVEY RESPONDENT



# FORCES DRIVING IT

- ROLE OF WORK
- ECONOMIC
- TECHNOLOGY

## The need for business knowledge

The #1 reason tradies get into the industry is to work for themselves, as a sole trader, with running a successful business ranking #3.

In second place is enjoying building things, showing that there's a big faction who love the hands-on work but don't lean into business admin.

Learning your trade is different to learning how to run a business (even if you're the only employee) and there is no clear pathway to business

stability and profitability—especially when costs keep rising and reliable team members is hard to find.

Business coaches, online courses, other trades business owners, and friends and family who run different types of small businesses are helping to fill the knowledge gap.

But the reality is many tradies spend years 'learning by doing' rather than learning from others, making it a stressful and fraught process.

“All future tradies should be educated on how to run a profitable business. Knowing how to work out their charge out rates and compete on **quality not price.**”

Plumber, male, 45-54YO, Kirrawee, NSW  
FUTURE TRADIE SURVEY RESPONDENT

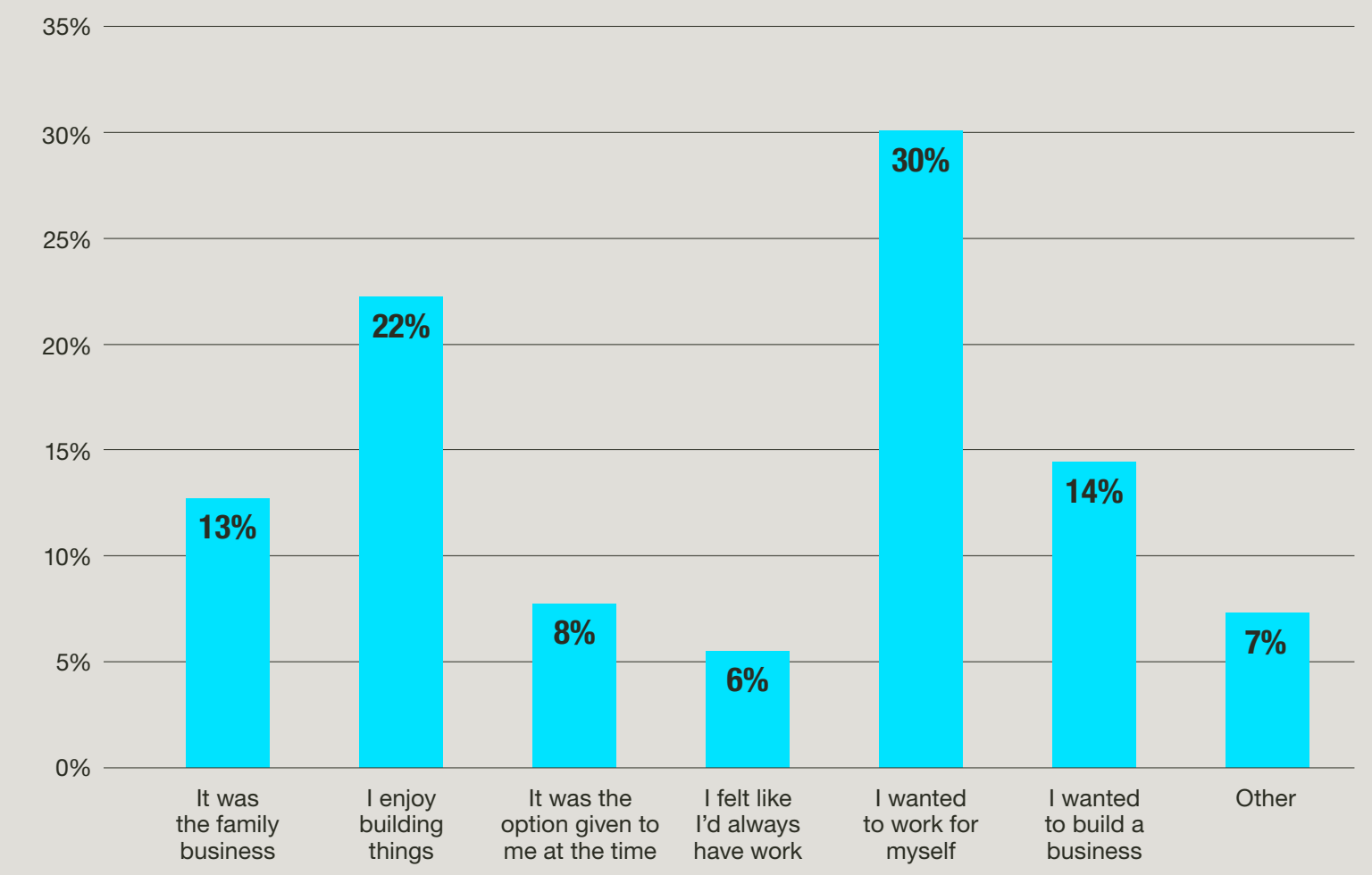
**38%**

of surveyed tradies under 25YO got into their trade because they wanted to **build a business.**

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

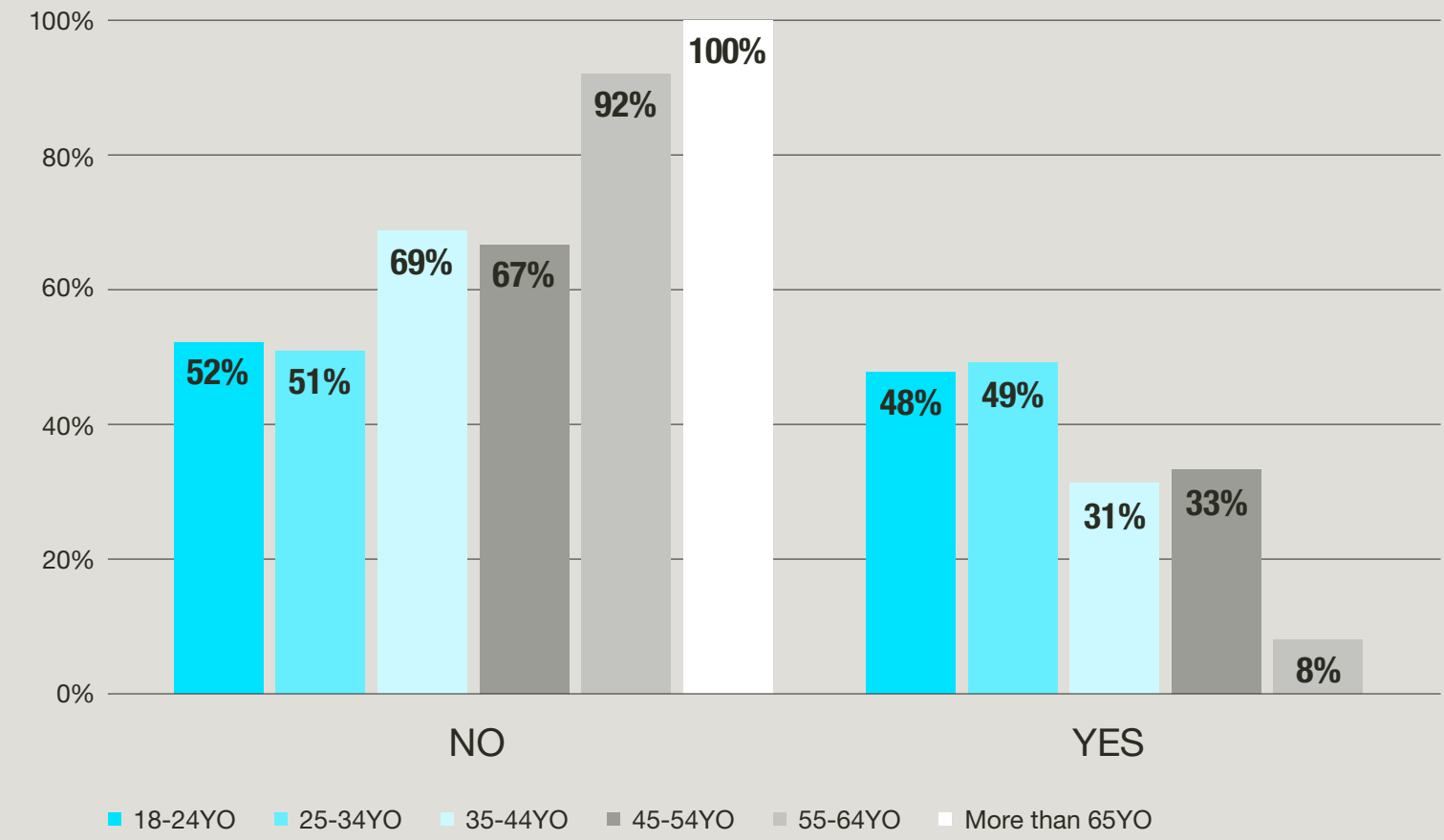
29% under 45YO, compared to 11% over 45YO

### Why did you get into the trades? (% of total respondents)



### Do you intend to start your own business in the next five years?

(% of respondents per age bracket)



**34%**

of surveyed tradies who don't run a business, **expect to start one** in the next five years

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

# FORCES DRIVING IT

 TECHNOLOGY

 LEGISLATIVE

## Lack of information on hot topics or specific skills

If a tradie works in a niche area such as passive housing or electricity storage, or need to navigate new building codes, chances are a peer has already demystified part of a challenge they are facing.


Because there isn't a lot of information available on the practical impact of codes, or new products and materials for niche jobs, tradies who are passionate about these topics are hunting out information for themselves, any way they can.



EVOBUILT

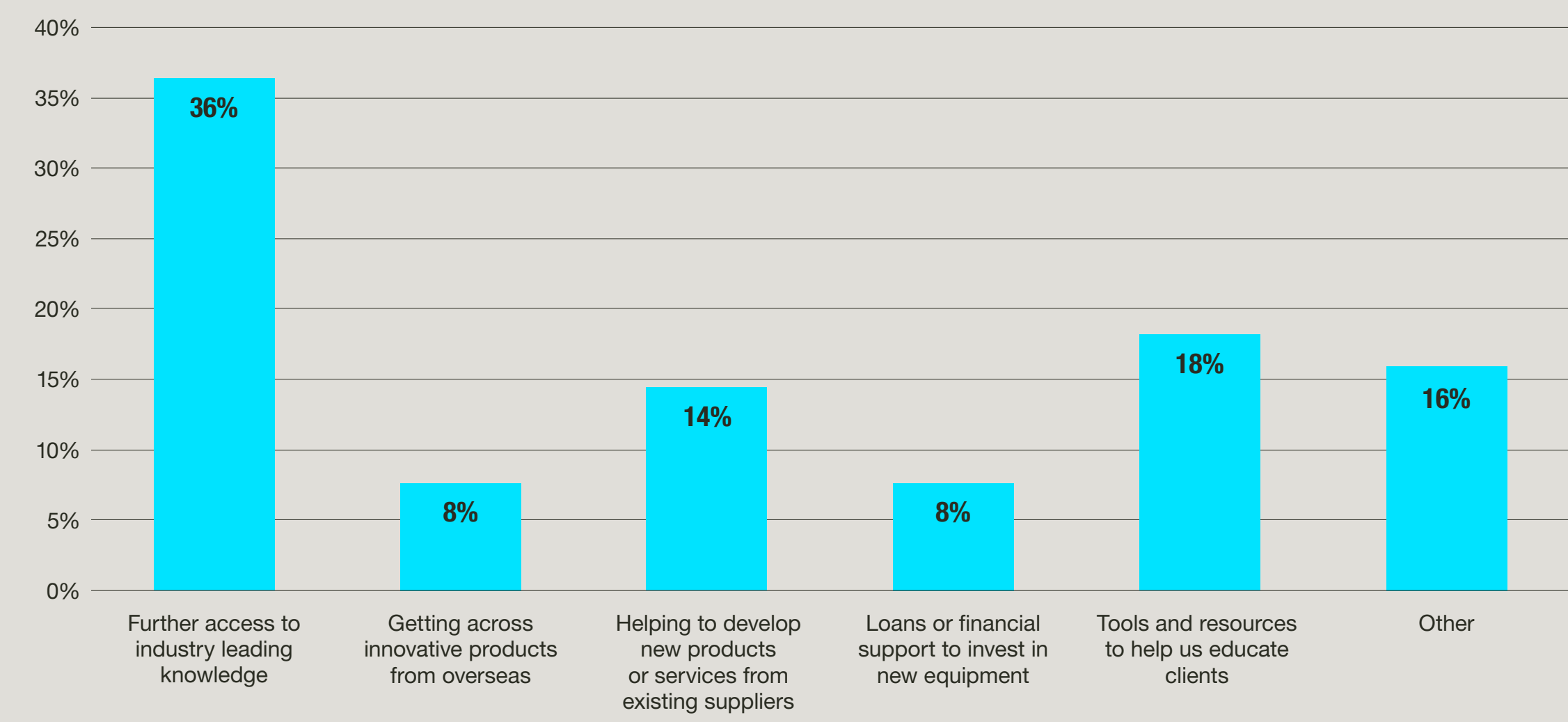
“We’re passionate about building healthy homes. By applying what we’ve learned and refining our practices, we’re not just enhancing our capabilities; we’re actively educating and **inspiring those around us.**”

Robby Kruyer, Builder  
Evobuilt

Watch Robby talk about collaboration and sharing information 

### What support do you feel you need to continue to develop your speciality?

(% of total respondents)



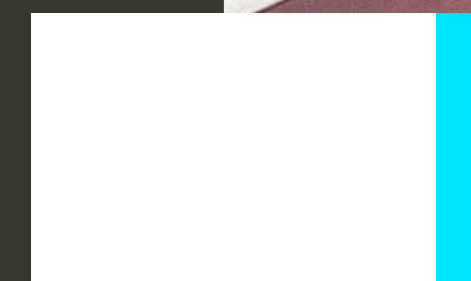
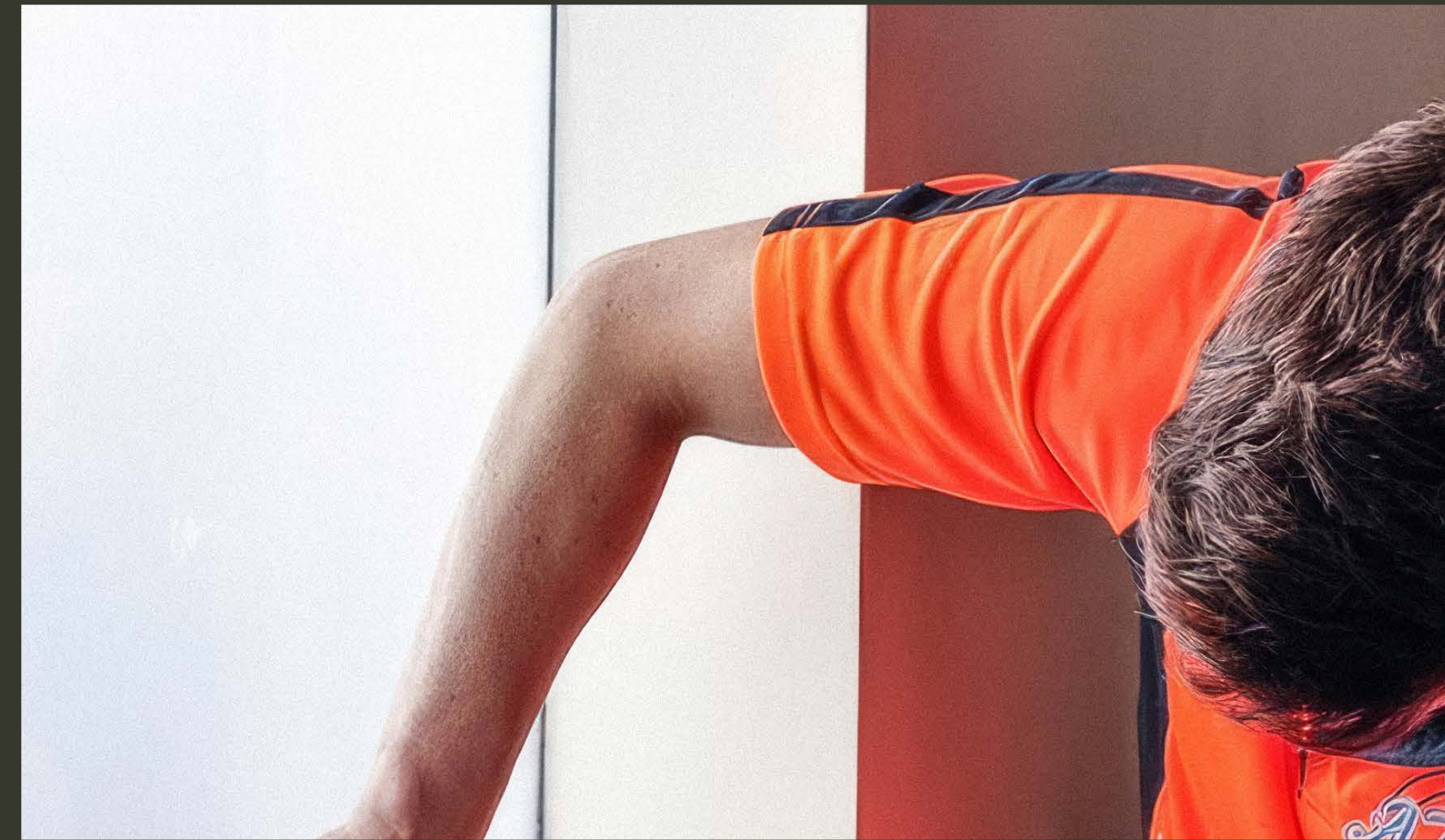


Having updates on key information such as codes/standards based off our customer profile of what kind of stuff we order would be awesome.

I'd be more inclined to click on an email about that than anything else in my inbox.

Carpenter & builder, male  
45-54YO  
Balmain, NSW

FUTURE TRADIE SURVEY RESPONDENT



A TEAM PAINTING PROFESSIONALS

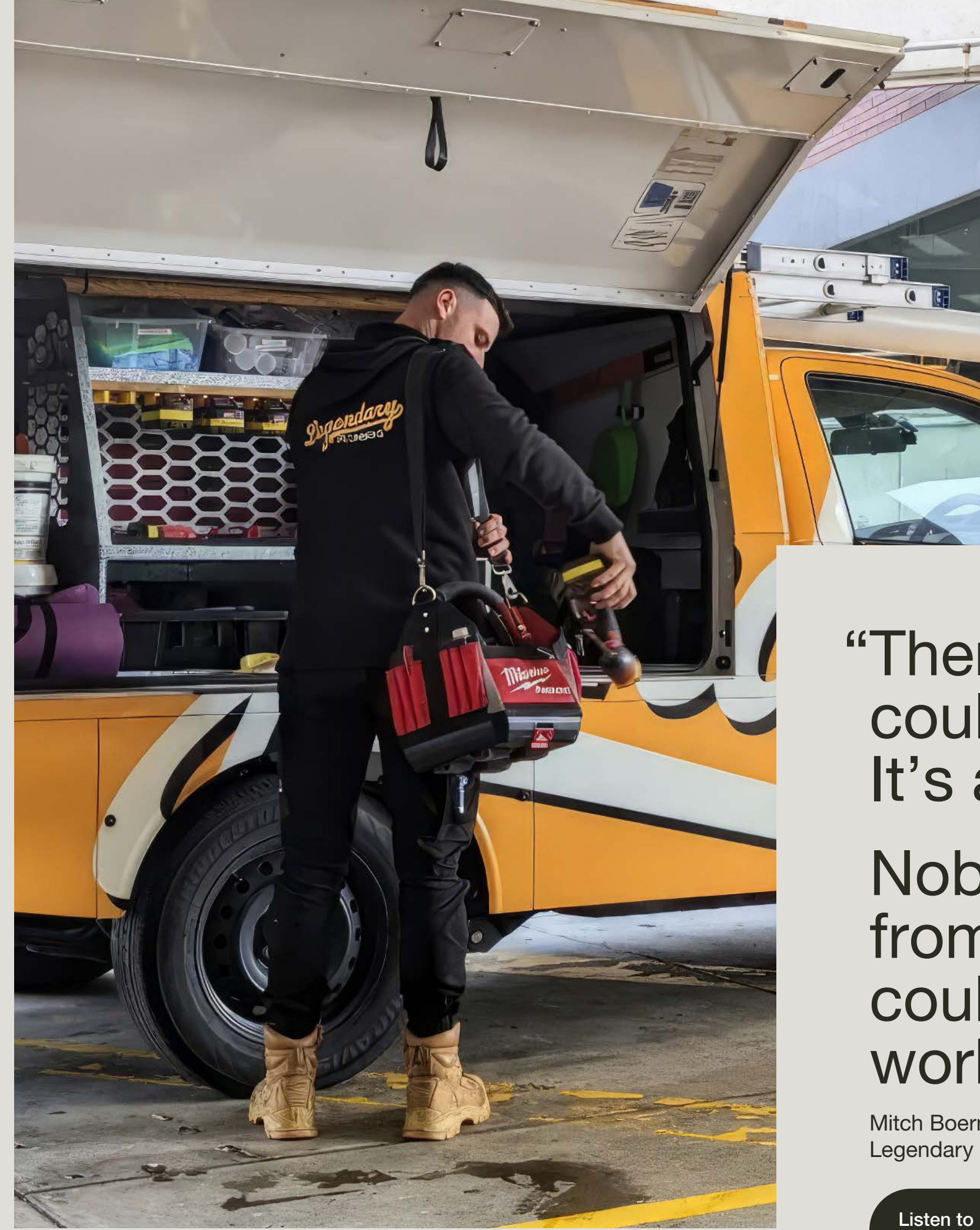
WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# The abundance mentality

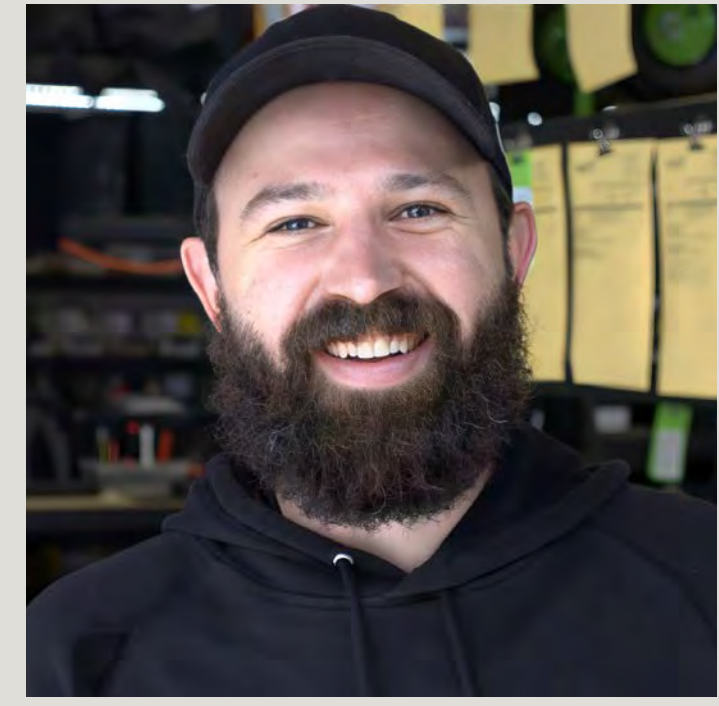
Traditional attitudes around ‘keeping success quiet’ are being bucked by new generations thanks to an abundance mentality that there’s plenty of work for everyone.

Instead, they are sharing success stories and knowledge with others, inspired by local self-made business owners and US-based entrepreneurs.

There’s pride in helping other tradespeople and growing the industry as a whole, while reminding individuals they need to put the personal work in to achieve results.



LEGENDARY PLUMBERS



“There’s more work than you could possibly ever imagine. It’s an **abundance mentality.**”

Nobody’s stealing anything from anybody, because you couldn’t possibly do all the work on your own anyway.”

Mitch Boerner, Plumbing business owner  
Legendary Plumbers

Listen to Mitch talk about abundance mentality

“ For some reason, we have a negative view of success.

How do we get people to say, “How did you do that?”

Rather than “He doesn’t deserve it.”

Mitch Boerner  
Plumbing business owner  
Legendary Plumbers



# WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## AI & business monitoring tools

More tradespeople are learning to use apps, AI tools like ChatGPT, job management systems and business monitoring software that measures billable hours and profitability.

Those who do embed new systems reap the benefits, saving time and having visibility of key business metrics, so they can solve problems before they snowball.

For small tasks like getting job listings out, understanding measurement conversions or creating marketing content, AI tools like Chat GPT have significantly shortened time investments.

Business owners are freed up to solve the big asks that ultimately deliver more value.



PLUMBIFY

At least  
**10**

surveyed tradies used ChatGPT to write answers to our 25-word survey question.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

“Honestly, I can get AI to write me a job ad in three seconds.

I can get ChatGPT to write the job description and ad, and I’ll just tweak a few things and then post it.

It used to take me half a day, now it takes me three minutes.”

Matthew Zubrinich, Plumber  
Plumbify

Listen to Matt talk about AI and business

“

The future tradie is tech savvy and specialised.

Plumber, male  
35-44YO  
Everton Park, QLD

FUTURE TRADIE SURVEY RESPONDENT





### WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# Business coaching and the accountability tax

Trade-specific business coaching gets results, provided leaders have the discipline to work on the business between coaching sessions.

For many, knowing where to start, where to focus next, or what good vs. bad margins look like are worth the fees alone. Guidance on setting up for success and what not to do avoids significant losses and saves owners hundreds of hours.

Paying a coach to run regular sessions (up to \$1,500 per month) also keeps business progress accountable. Some coaches provide access to a closed network of other ambitious emerging leaders to learn from.

Bespoke micro-check ins are on the up. Think of them as personal training for financial and operational fitness.

**100%**

of the respondents who define success as having a strong business model, use business coaches.

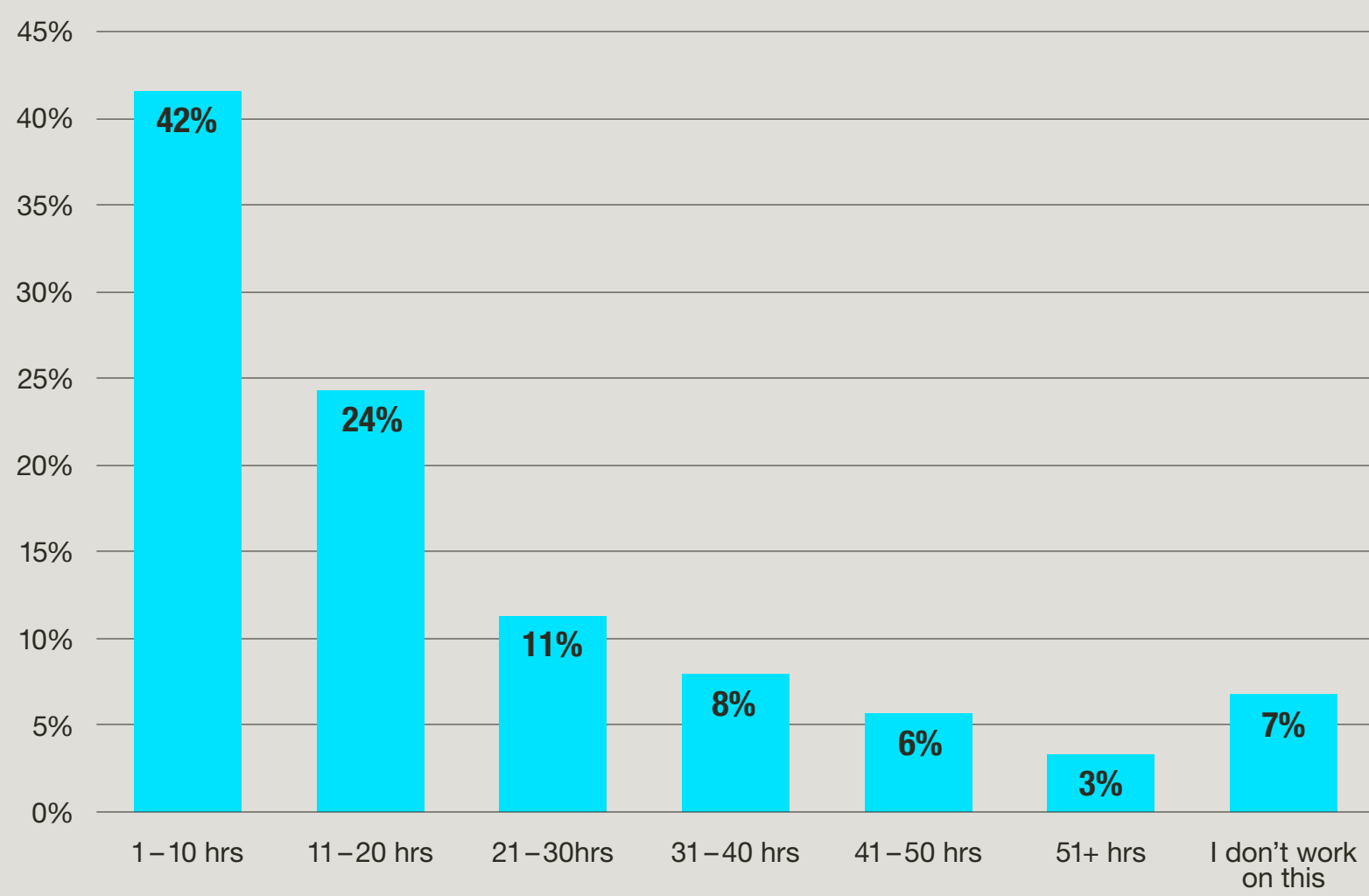


PLUMBIFY

**28%**  
of surveyed tradies who use a business coach, do **more than 30 hours** of admin a week

How many hours per week do you spend on admin tasks (not on the tools) like operations, planning, marketing and management?

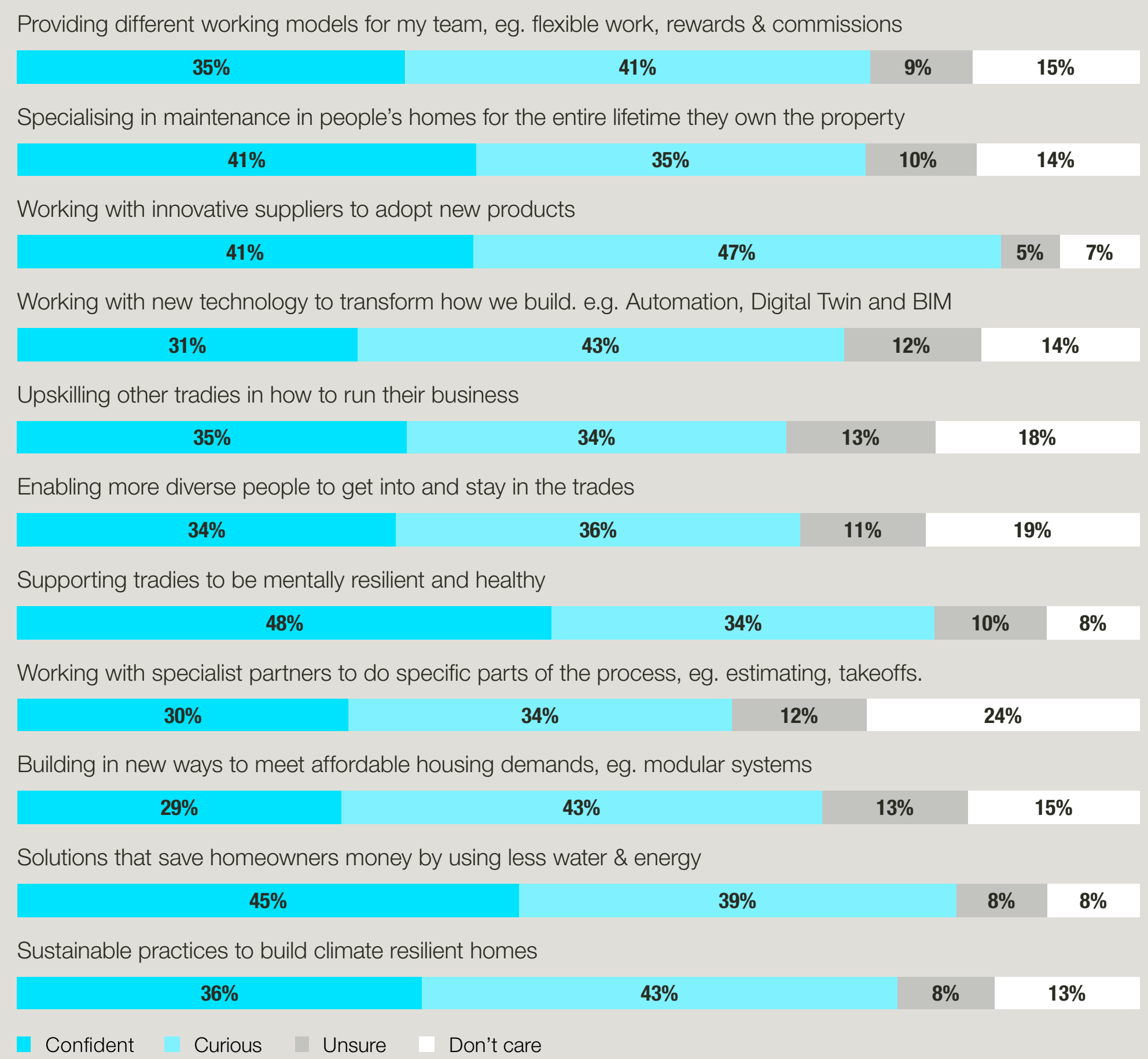
(% of total respondents)



# WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## Opportunities for learning

We asked our respondents to select if they felt curious, confident, unsure or didn't care about the following business opportunities.



# Tapping into low-touch specialists

Looking beyond the core team's skillsets helps business owners identify and accelerate areas of improvement they might not usually spot.

Partnering with specialists in automation, costing and estimating, branding and marketing, workflow planning, people management and even interior design is becoming more common.

Focussing on adding one capability at a time and ensuring it's properly embedded into the business drives real progress—instead of changing too much, too soon.

Some professionals are outsourcing materials costing for bigger jobs to get more accurate results (saving on over-ordering), free up time and prove to clients they aren't inflating jobs.

All of our interviewed trades trailblazers use specialist partners to get ahead. However one in four tradies surveyed don't care about this way of working, and are missing out.

Our interviewees mentioned using **specialist partners and advisors** to improve their business — but 23% of surveyed tradies don't care about specialist partners or service providers.

### WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## Passion-fuelled connections

Tradies who are passionate about a niche want access to industry-leading knowledge so they can improve, develop new offers and hone their craft.

When they can't find what they need through suppliers or industry bodies, they reach out to others for intel via Instagram, TikTok, Reddit and LinkedIn, making new connections.

They are equally passionate about sharing any knowledge they have, too, creating niche networks.

Investing in the community by collaborating and supporting each other (not hiding company secrets or putting others down) is an attitudinal shift that's strengthening the quality of tradies' networks and the final output.

Social networks are especially appealing because they can be accessed anytime, anywhere— simply open an app, search the archives, ask a new question, or answer somebody else's.

Tradies who are passionate about a niche are more likely to adopt new ways of finding out fresh information.

35-55YOs who specialise in a niche:

**28% MORE**  
use Instagram compared to other tradies

**20% LESS**  
use phone calls compared to other tradies

“I think it’s important to help others that are out there starting from scratch.

If I can give my knowledge to the up and coming builders to help them avoid challenges that we faced it will **build a better future for all.**”

Carpenter, male, 35-44YO, Belgrave, VIC



Listen to Joe talk about younger sparkies coming to him for renewable energy knowledge



Listen to Bek talk about sharing information to build trust in builders



32%

of surveyed tradies who work in a specialist niche are driven by **passion & commitment** to expertise — they are sharing information & collaborating to solve problems.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

### WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## Training without the travel

Educational events in suppliers' branches or stores used to be core to learning beyond formal training.

However, emerging business leaders struggle to justify time spent travelling to events and don't always see the value in discovering new products and brands in-person.

Virtual training, product updates & knowledge sharing without the travel time is a drawcard for a generation that learns what they can online and is increasingly intentional with their time.

What they save, they invest in other business tasks or enjoying work-life balance.



"I would love to see best practice groups here in Australia.

Plumbing or HVAC or electricians are **coming together**, whether it be through a paid subscription or not, to talk about things they're seeing in the market."

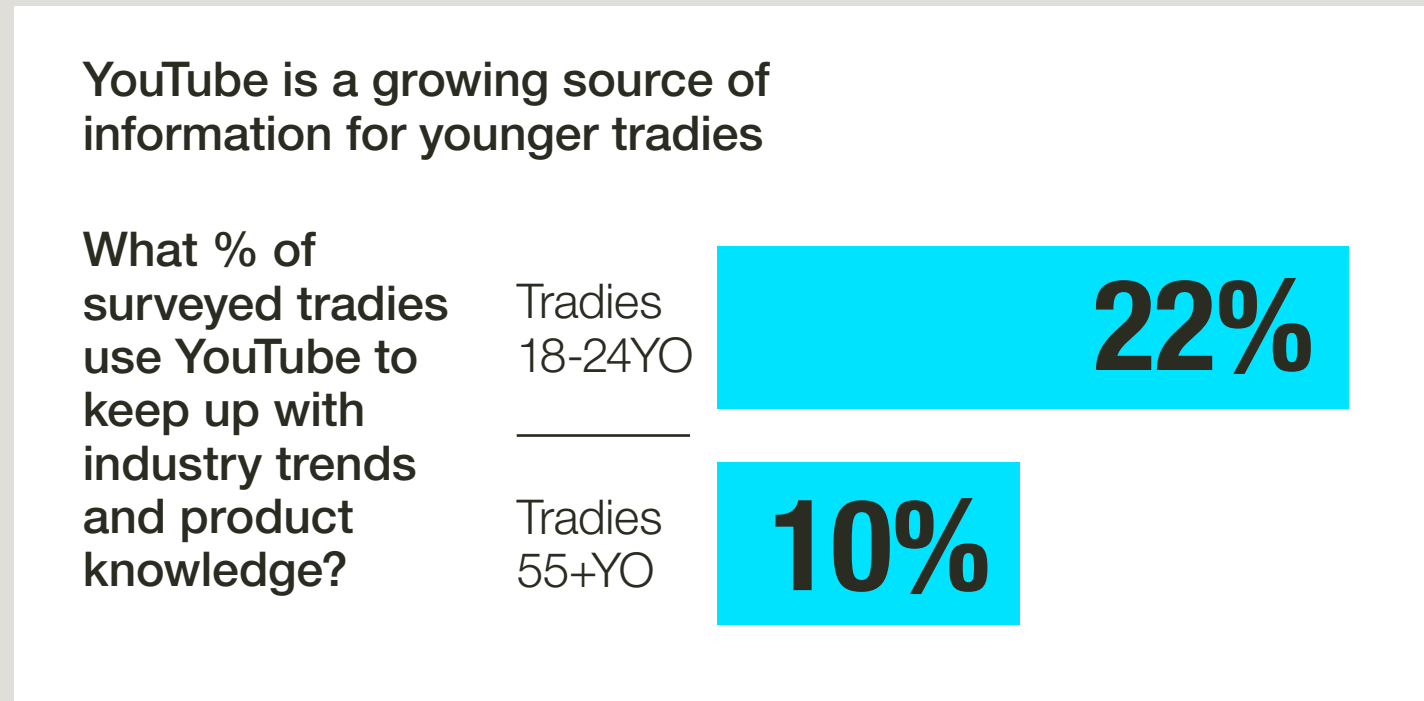
Mitch Boerner, Plumbing business owner  
Legendary Plumbers

Listen to Mitch talk about the opportunity for best practice groups

### How do you keep up with industry news, fresh knowledge, new products and services?

(% of respondents per age bracket)

	YouTube	Instagram	Industry body events	Google	Facebook	Events in local branch	Trade shows	Emails	Convos with other tradies	Brochures in branch
18-24YO	22%	9%	6%	3%	28%	3%	9%	9%	13%	3%
25-34YO	18%	13%	6%	2%	24%	10%	17%	17%	6%	0%
35-44YO	12%	11%	2%	2%	24%	9%	24%	24%	9%	1%
45-54YO	15%	6%	3%	2%	18%	8%	26%	27%	12%	1%
55-64YO	9%	4%	6%	2%	9%	14%	27%	28%	14%	2%
Over 65YO	11%	1%	8%	3%	6%	15%	24%	24%	11%	0%



# WHAT WE ARE SEEING

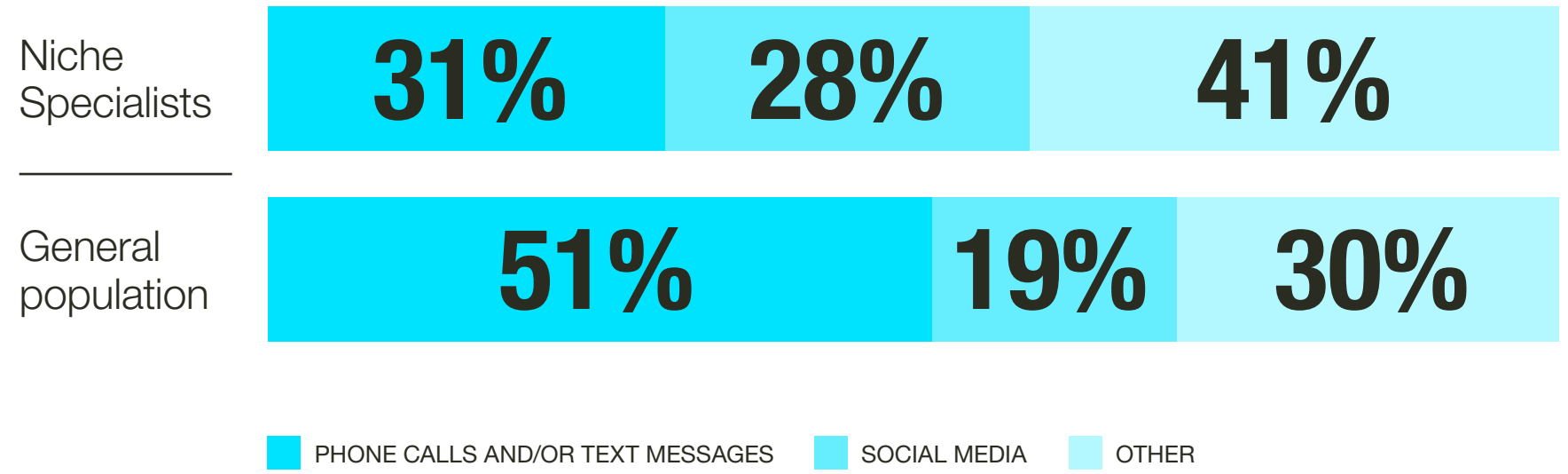
## Tradies as educational content creators

Tradespeople are starting their own YouTube channels, podcasts and social media series to shine a light on their skills, or great practitioners who have something to share.

From practical tips to first-hand accounts of navigating mental health, creating platforms of knowledge about the reality of being on the tools is a way trades are supporting their own.

### Niche Specialists look to social media to keep across new solutions

How do 35-55YO surveyed tradies keep up with industry trends and product knowledge?



“Younger people don’t really know that much about bricklaying, so that was another reason to make the channel.

We’ve had a few people reach out, saying **“I want to be involved.”**

Tyrone Sienna, Bricklayer  
Bricks By Ty

Listen to Tyrone talk about sharing bricklaying know-how

### WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## New exit strategies

Anecdotally, trades business owners need help with exit strategies.

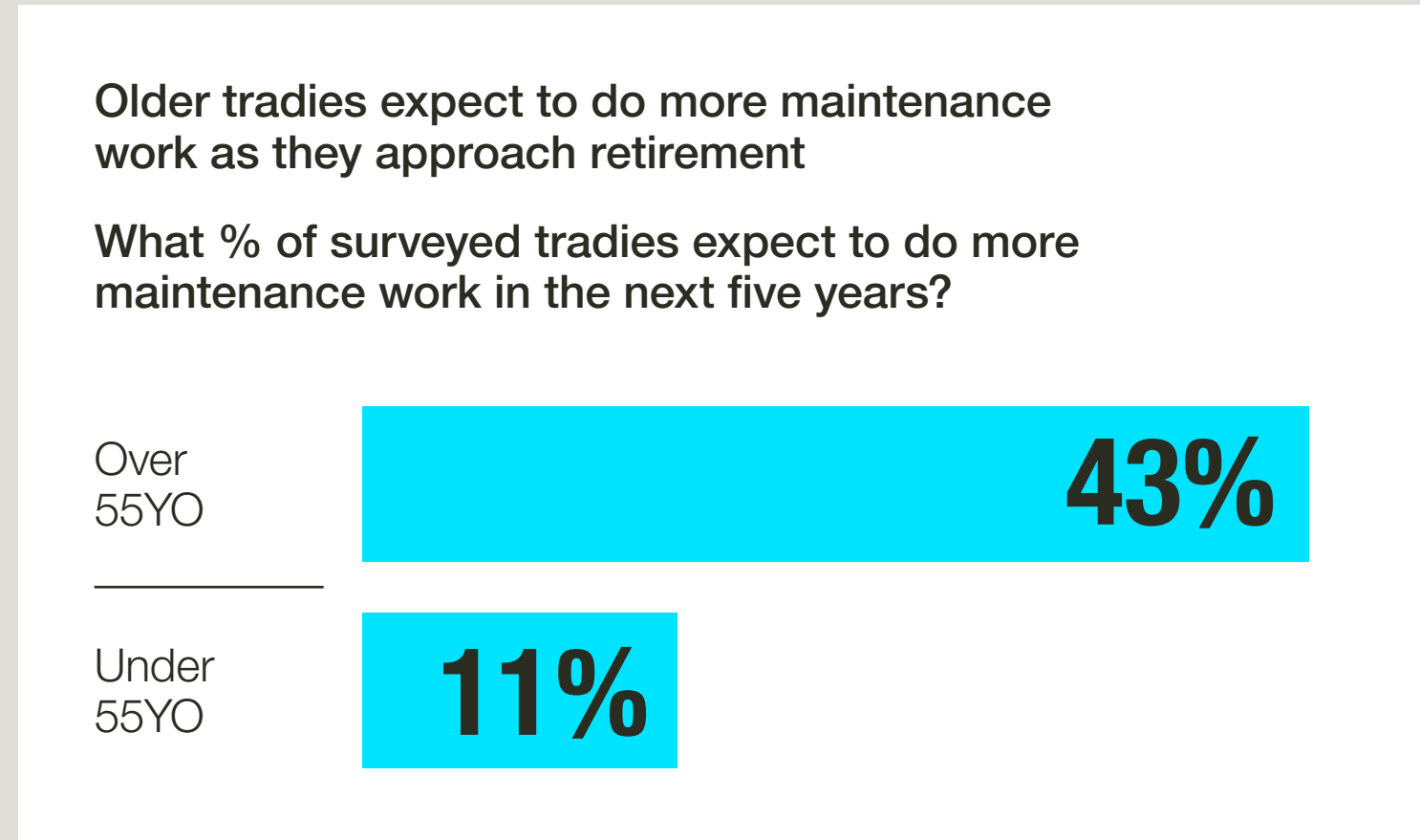
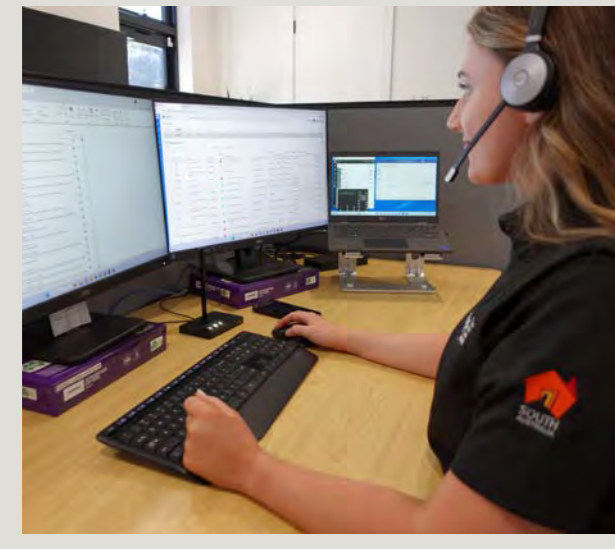
Few consider what their end game is when starting their business and end up faced with detrimental ownership structures and legal challenges.

Some don't understand how to sell the value of their business or expertise, so simply shut up shop.

There's a clear opportunity to support tradies by helping them plan for this milestone. Monetising their

expertise as business coaches— instead of seeking out maintenance work as a way of winding down is a new route to exiting.

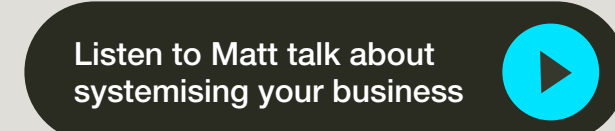
Encouraging them to share know-how would lift up the industry and create more options for both retiring trades who want to keep working, and for emerging leaders who need industry insight.



“I’m forced to systemise my business so much that it can be sold. Even if I don’t want to sell it, in doing that process, I’ve built myself out.

**That has to be the end goal of every business owner.”**

Matthew Zubrinich, Plumber  
Plumbify



# Spotlight on trailblazers

## EVOBUILT

### Robby Kruyer

Trade: Builder

Age: mid 30's

Location: Rowville, VIC

#### Connecting with others, everywhere.

Robby is frequently connecting with other tradies and suppliers to learn about passive housing, so he and his team continue to build better.

Robby reached out to one builder, Kyle in Tasmania, who was specialising in healthy homes. Together they travel to trade shows and awards, share the latest information and are building a network of skilled tradies who want to do the same.

Robby's door is always open to other trade business owners who are passionate about the niche.

He sees sharing information with them as a way to improve the industry overall, moving away from 10-year warranties towards building for 30+ year lifespans.

And if they are chatting about passive housing, they often share information about business culture, processes and overseas practitioners, too.



“If I can help anyone build better, I’m going to show you exactly what I’m doing.

The old school mentality of keeping everything to yourself is the wrong mentality.

**We need to work together as a collective.”**

Watch Robby talk about sharing know-how





# Spotlight on trailblazers



**ELITE BUILDING SERVICES**

## Bek Bishop

Trade: Builder

Age: early 40's

Location: Pakenham, Victoria

### Sharing key information

As a lawyer, Bek is good at distilling information into something that's meaningful and easy for others to understand.

During COVID, Bek took it upon herself to share information about restrictions and lockdowns relating to the trade industry, to support her trades teams and other businesses like hers. Now, she has a mailing list of 200+ professionals who trust her as a reputable source.

Bek also shares checklists, documentation and resources that the Elite team use to service her clients, to make the load easier on builders trying to up their game.



**BRICKS BY TY**

## Tyrone Sienna

Trade: Bricklayer

Age: early 20's

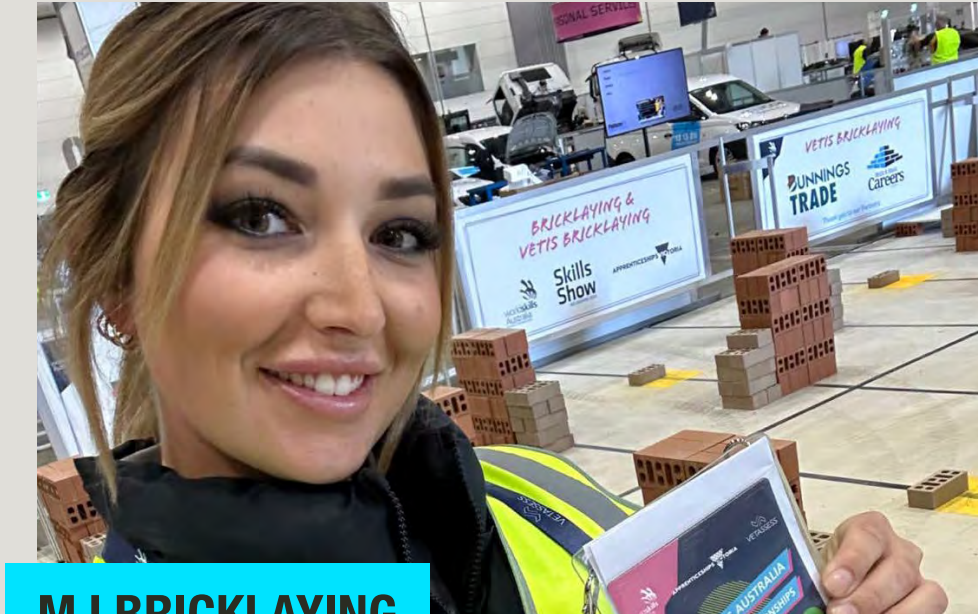
Location: Melbourne, Victoria

### Making useful content

Going through his apprenticeship, Ty felt as though there wasn't enough information around to help him learn more about his trade.

Now qualified and running a business of his own, Ty creates bricklaying "How To" videos on YouTube and TikTok to share real insight into the trade and improve the quality of bricklaying in Australia.

Ty now has a global following, connecting with brickies around the world about techniques, standards and worksite norms.



**MJ BRICKLAYING**

## Monique Juratovac

Trade: Bricklayer

Age: mid 20's

Location: Brisbane, Queensland

### Platforming others' stories

When Monique started her own business she didn't have much support or knowledge on the best way to go about it. She was also up against false stereotypes about being a woman in the industry.

She now runs the Let's Talk Tradies podcast, where she shares her own journey and invites other tradespeople to talk about their experiences, to help others in a similar position navigate the beginning of their career more easily.

# Opportunities for government and industry bodies

## TO START DOING

Be aware of the challenges being discussed in communities & help solve them.

This could look like:

- **Joining existing digital communities:** To keep across what's being discussed and seeding useful information in organic communities.
- **Employing specialists:** To respond to queries on platforms such as Reddit with information about building codes and further learning.

## TO PLAN FOR

Provide “training without the travel” so that tradies can access the knowledge they need.

This could look like:

- **Virtual training programs:** Webinars, virtual training, ‘AMA’ (ask me anything series) or tax information sessions with experts.
- **On demand training content:** Podcasts that deep dive into a current topic, and give clarity on how it impacts everyday tradespeople.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Create platforms for cross-industry business leaders to connect locally and internationally.

This could look like:

- **Business forums:** Knowledge sharing events, where leaders showcase their work and learn from others.
- **Case studies:** Including those in the trade, and from business outside the industry, to bring outside thinking in.
- **International networking program:** Partner with others in countries such as the US or regions such as Europe to build knowledge of international ways of doing things and bring outside thinking in.

# Opportunities for supplier businesses and brands

## TO START DOING

Celebrate and support those leading the way to share knowledge.

This could look like:

- **Tradie lunch & learns:** Invite a tradie to share their learnings with your teams. Understand how they go about running their business, their challenges and values.
- **Celebrate product experts:** Build a community around those that know their stuff. Highlight them on social media or draw on their learnings and feedback.

## TO PLAN FOR

Provide opportunities for professionals to connect with each other.

This could look like:

- **Networking events:** An event for early adopters of a new technology or product innovation
- **Educational emails:** Educational emails that focus on customer niches, instead of broad product comms
- **Co-working spaces:** Tradie only co-working spaces they can work from and meet at.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Partner with service experts & platforms so customers can access information.

This could look like:

- **Working with service partners:** for automation, business coaching, BIM files, legal guidance
- **AI knowledge banks:** Easy to use information hubs that are accessible onsite.
- **Trade business benchmarking:** Provide benchmarks based on similar businesses so they can see how they measure up.

# Opportunities for trades small businesses

## TO START DOING

Find your community online and get involved.

This could look like:

- **Tradie content creators:** Following specific hashtags on Instagram and TikTok, or joining online communities on Reddit and Discord.
- **Reach out:** Reaching out 1-1 to other tradespeople on social networks to build a connection and share knowledge.

## TO PLAN FOR

Look outside of your immediate industry: what and who can you learn from?

This could look like:

- **Scaling businesses:** Learning about how other businesses scale, manage profit margins and market themselves.
- **Small business case studies:** Following business case studies and podcasts that cover businesses outside the trades.
- **Connecting directly:** Connecting with other business owners to ask how they achieved success.
- **Expand your partners:** Partnering with someone with a different business background that could offer a different perspective on business.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Consider finding a business coach and other partners to keep you on track.

This could look like:

- **A marketing specialist** to help you grow your brand & get leads.
- **A materials estimator** for more accurate outsourced materials costs.
- **A people management specialist** to help you nurture your team.

02

# VALUES REBOOT

The future tradie needs to excel in resilience, integrity, adaptability, professionalism, dedication and empathy.

Trust, focus and respect help them to navigate change and to connect with those from different generations and backgrounds.



TY SIENNA, BRICKS BY TY

# Values reboot summary

## WHAT IT IS

The future tradie needs to excel in resilience, integrity, adaptability, professionalism, dedication and empathy.

Trust, focus and respect help them to navigate change and to connect with those from different generations and backgrounds.

## WHAT'S DRIVING IT

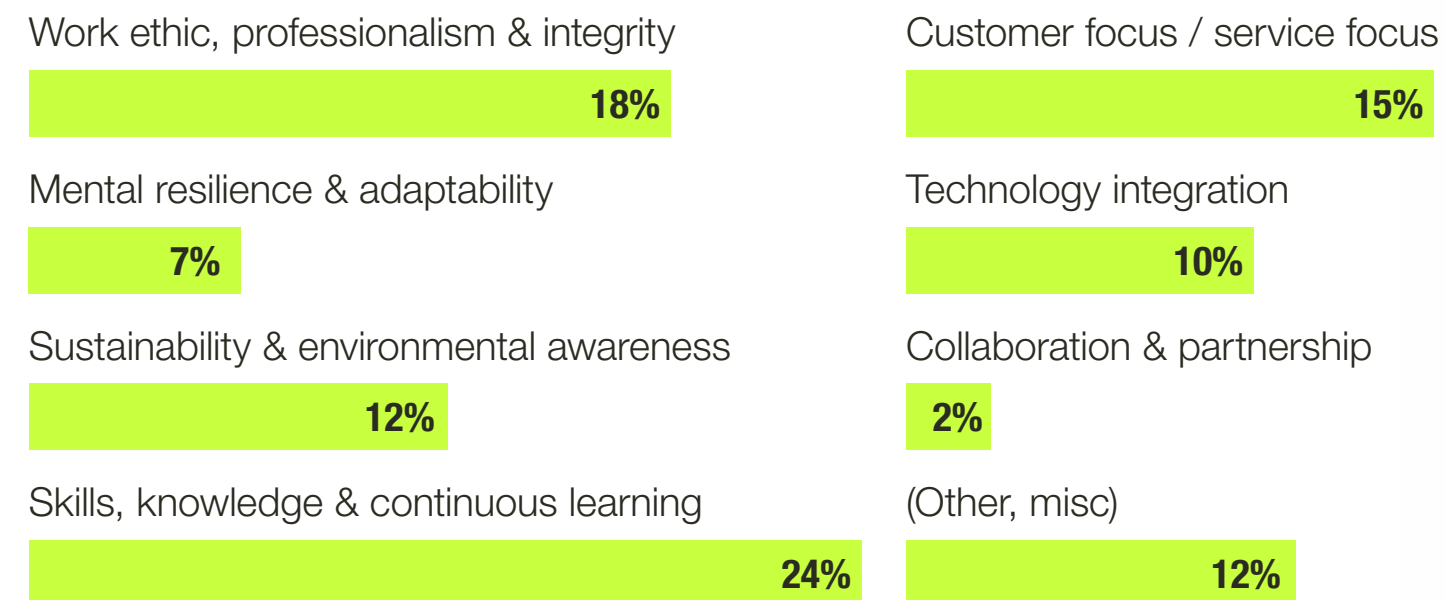
- Higher expectations of professionalism are placed on tradies as clients' standards increase
- Change is on the horizon, especially in new technologies, smart home systems and sustainable solutions
- People who would previously have gone into white-collar jobs enter the trade workforce
- Success is defined differently by different tradespeople, depending on their career stage and personal priorities
- Trust being rebuilt between clients, tradespeople and other partners after an era of shoddy work and overcharging
- 1-1 relationships and dedication are still vital to getting ahead

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Increased client trust
- Improved client experiences
- New avenues for business (through technology, sustainability and smart homes)
- Healthier team cultures that promote learning
- Untapped potential for apprentices and young guns to learn from experienced tradies with 40 years under their belts

## DESCRIBE THE FUTURE TRADIE

### Describe the future tradie



## THE FUTURE TRADIE

Does business with integrity; They know maintaining client trust is their responsibility and makes winning work easier.

Keeps up to date with training, legislation and codes, so the quality of their knowledge and skill is the best it can be.

Acts professionally; takes pride in their appearance, how they communicate and finishing the job to a high standard.

Views failure as a learning opportunity, admits when they have made mistakes, and encourages others to do the same, so everyone can learn and cheer each other on.

Forms genuine 1-1 relationships, maintained via social media and phone calls (open to either channel).

Commits to their trade and doing things the right way, even if it takes more time or requires learning new skills.

Self-starts and is hungry for expertise, which they share with others in their community.

Respects others and tries to have empathy, even if they come from different backgrounds or generations they aren't as confident talking to.

Rolls with change and embeds it into their business, instead of fighting against it.

# What is the values reboot?

Tradespeople know their industry has done it tough. Dodgy practitioners, changing building codes, and ambitious climate and housing targets mean the **pressure keeps piling on.**



AIMEE STANTON, TINY STAYS & ZADIE WORKWEAR



TY SIENNA, BRICKS BY TY

A huge generational shift is coming as established tradespeople retire within the next decade. A young, ambitious generation of new tradies is founding businesses with Millennial and Gen Z values.

Emerging leaders are doubling down on resilience, integrity, adaptability, professionalism, dedication and empathy.

These values will help reinforce trust in the industry, as well as enabling business owners to navigate ongoing change.

Success is important but looks different to everyone.

Hard work and relationship-building are essentials, however a broader approach to knowledge, embracing change and welcoming new thinking means future tradies are adaptable and open-minded.

They grew up in an era of constant change and are ready to move with it.

## Describe the future tradie

(% of total respondents)

Work ethic, professionalism & integrity



Mental resilience & adaptability



Sustainability & environmental awareness



Skills, knowledge & continuous learning



Customer focus / service focus



Technology integration



Collaboration & partnership



(Other, misc)



# FORCES DRIVING IT

POPULATION      ROLE OF WORK

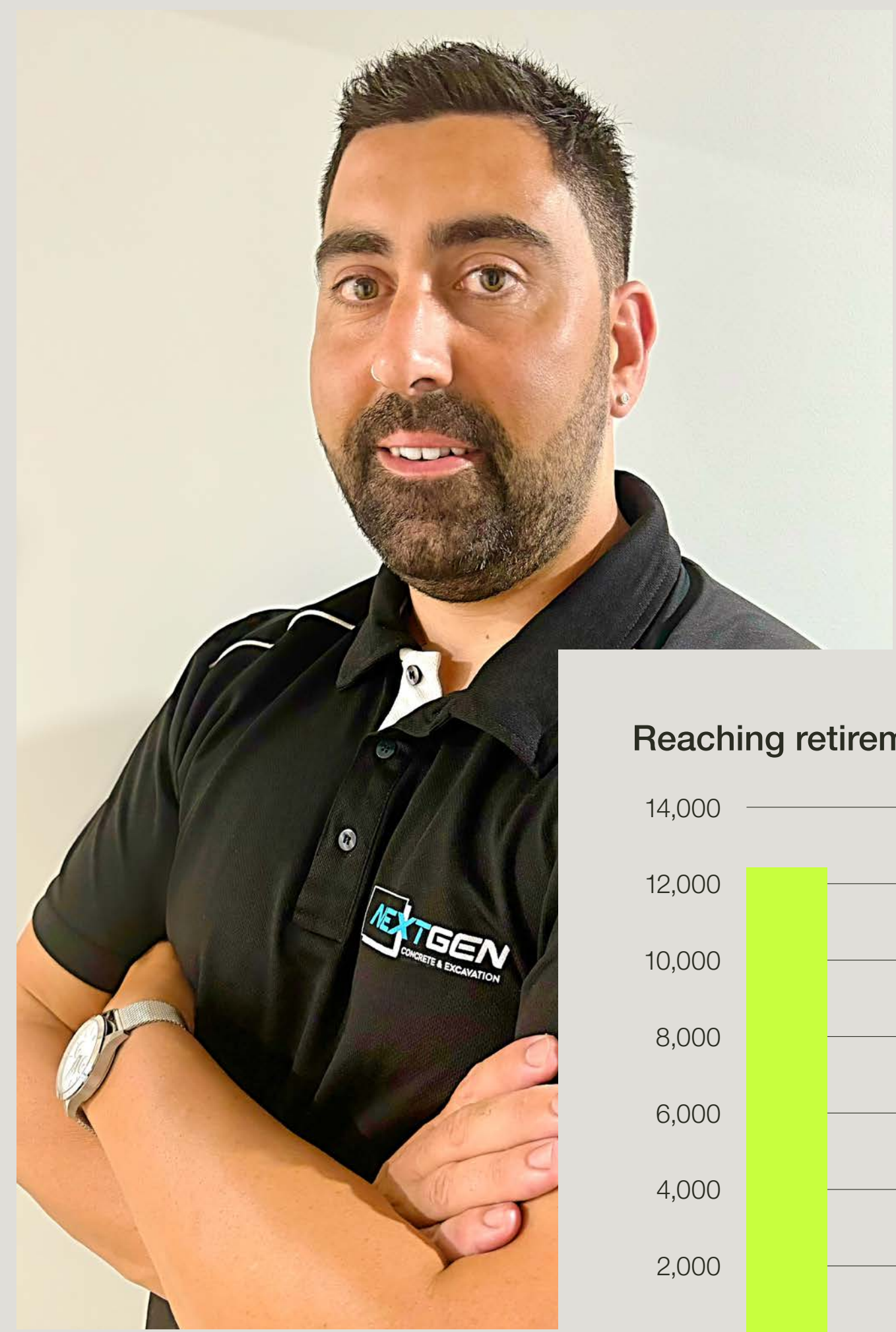
## Generational switch-up

Four million baby boomers will achieve retirement eligibility within five years—most of them will exit the workforce in just over a decade.

**In the trades industry, that means 16% of the current workforce calling “tools down” between now & 2033.**

In the next 10 years, more Millennials and Gen Zers will be starting businesses that prioritise better work-life balance and combine purposeful work with profit and reward.

Flexible hours, making space for family, pet and hobby commitments, and encouraging diversity and individuality come as standard. Younger tradespeople are proud to work for businesses that uphold these values.

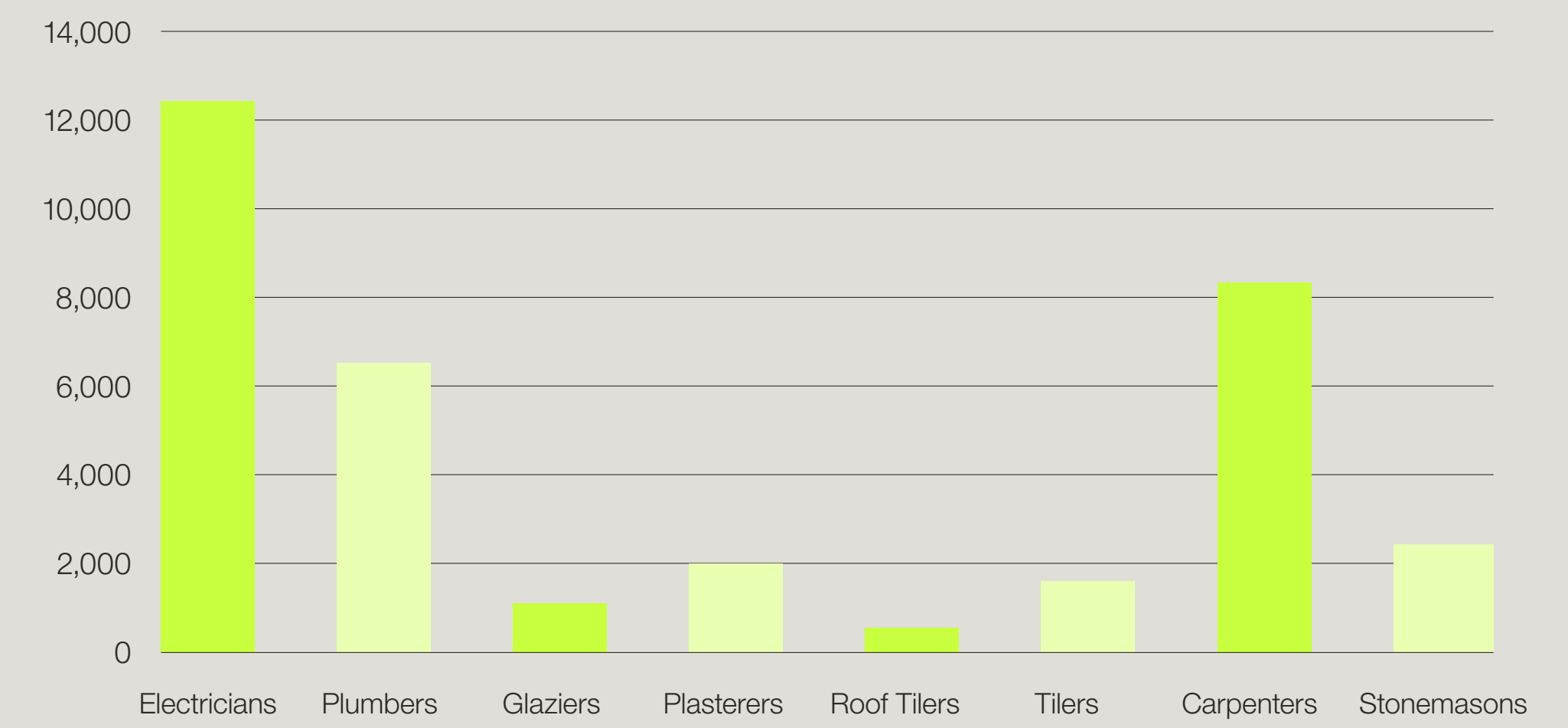


“It was never being patted on the back, never being rewarded. So much in my life I gave away to greedy people.”

Joseph Rodriguez, concreter  
Next Gen Concrete

Listen to Joseph talk about working with the outgoing generation

Reaching retirement age in the next 10 years



AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS (2021) ENGAGEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND 4-DIGIT OCCP OCCUPATION BY AGE [CENSUS TABLEBUILDER], ACCESSED 01 NOVEMBER 2023.





PLUMBIFY



## THE NEXT TEN YEARS

# 16%

of today's trade workforce  
will retire by 2033

# 75%

of the trade workforce  
will be Millennials &  
Gen Zers by 2033

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS (2021) ENGAGEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND 4-DIGIT OCCP OCCUPATION BY AGE [CENSUS TABLEBUILDER], ACCESSED 01 NOVEMBER 2023.

# FORCES DRIVING IT

- LEGISLATION
- TECHNOLOGY
- CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY

## Anticipating change

Tech, building codes, new ways of doing things, new client expectations... There is a lot of change happening and tradespeople don't expect it to slow down.

Embedding new technologies into how they work, providing tech and smart home solutions, and suggesting sustainable or low-energy solutions to clients are all challenges that tradespeople expect to increase in importance by more than 40% in the next five years.

Being eager to understand and embrace change is key to business success.

### Areas expected to grow in importance in the next five years:

(% change in response)

Embedding new technologies

**+49%**

Tech and smart home solutions

**+83%**

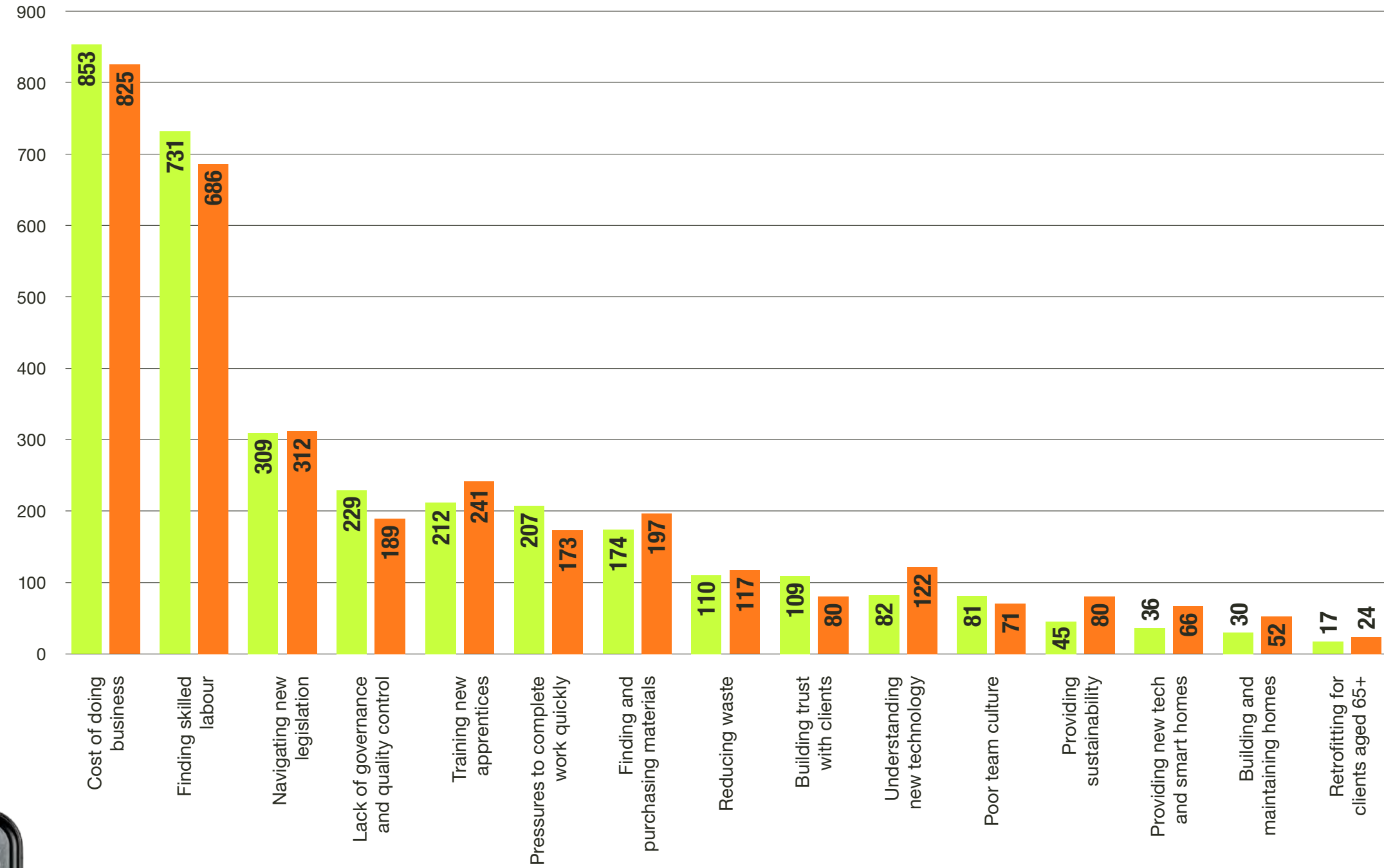
Sustainable or low energy solutions

**+78%**

### Current challenges vs. future challenge

(number of total respondents)

■ BIGGEST CURRENT CHALLENGE  
■ BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN THE NEXT 5+ YEARS



### Describe the future tradie

“Someone who is curious and willing to embrace change, and be open to bringing our industry in to the **21st century.**”

Builder, male  
25-34YO, Wonthaggi VIC

## CORE VALUES

## Ability &amp; aptitude

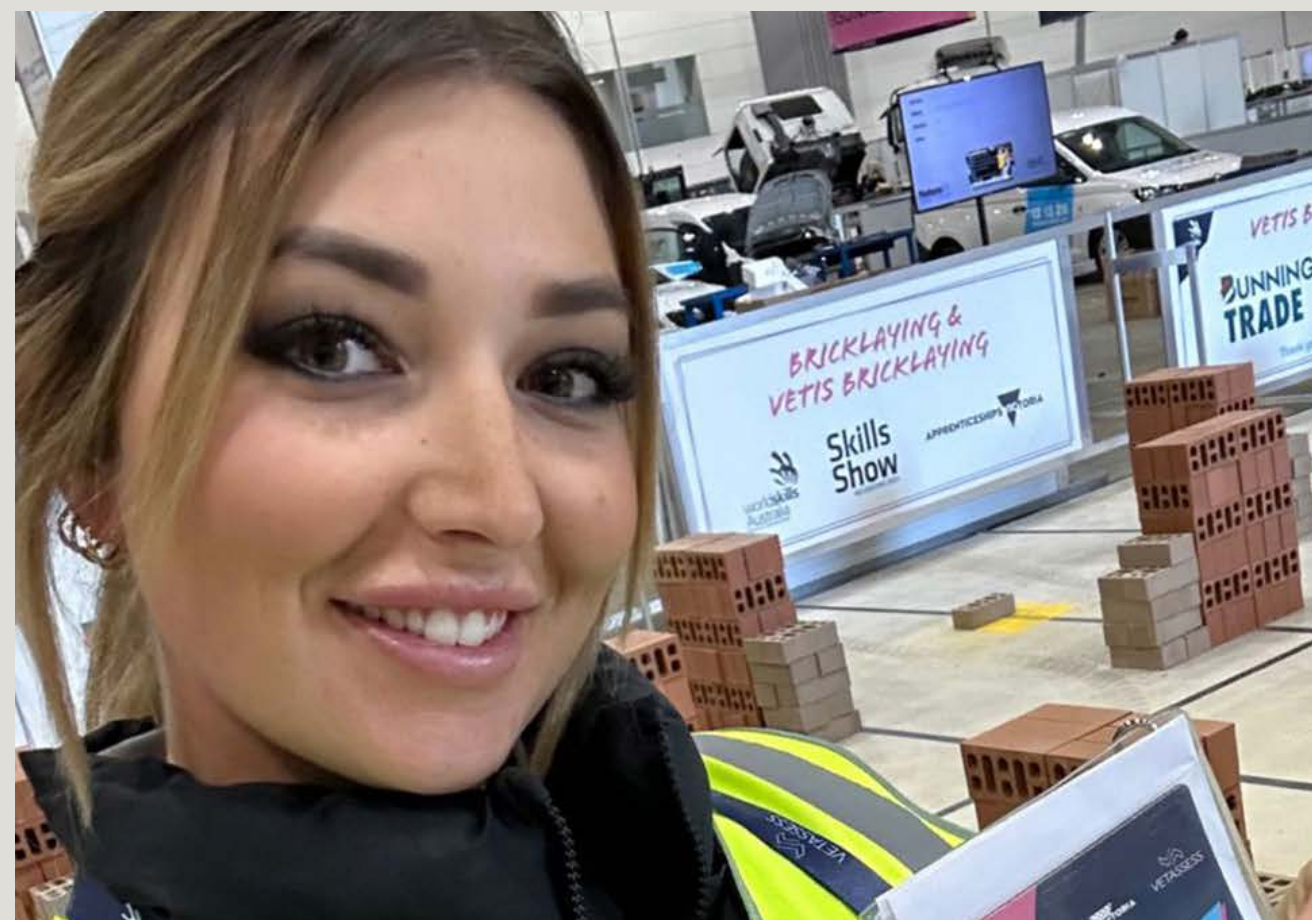
Having the skill to do what you say you do is at the core. Future tradies need to be skilled and open to learning ways of doing things so they don't get left behind.

## Integrity

Honesty, transparency and follow-through underpin the future tradie's take on integrity. They right the wrongs of dodgy work, put in extra effort to win clients' trust and don't want the pains caused by bad apples who give tradies a bad name.

## Resilience

The ability to fail (and to keep trying), to navigate change and to learn from others creates resilience. Mistakes and changes are going to happen, it's all about how they deal with them.



# FUTURE TRADIE CORE VALUES



MJ BRICKLAYING

## Professionalism

Respect for people's homes, timely communication, neat presentation and a brand that instils pride are important as trades become professional services. Think: Helpful hands-on consultants, not parts and labour.

## Dedication

A strong work ethic, commitment to learning to do things the right way (even if it takes longer) and the self-starting ability to hunt out and share expertise define dedication.

## Empathy

Empathy is about connecting with other tradies 1-1, working with a team member from a different background or generation, or trying to put themselves in the shoes of their customer so they can deliver great service.

“

Success is a mindset built on confidence, reliability & responsibility.

Builder, female  
18-24YO  
Canberra, ACT

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023



# WHAT WE ARE SEEING



**“To be trusted to come in and turn a really horrible experience into a pleasurable experience, that’s something really humbling.”**

Bek Bishop, Builder  
Elite Building Services

Listen to Bek talk about rebuilding trust in the wake of post-COVID bankruptcy

## The pathway to rebuilding trust

With tradespeople exposing others’ shoddy work on social media, project teams leaving jobsite mess for others to clean up, and media headlines highlighting poor practitioners, trust in tradies has hit an all-time low—but it is beginning to bounce back.

Emerging trades business leaders are working hard to rebuild trust by showing that they have nothing to hide. Some even welcome inspectors to assess work, seeing any pick-ups as learning opportunities for their teams.

Their ongoing commitment to personal integrity, paired with leading by example, is mending the trust void.

Governance, quality control and building trust with clients are being rectified

Lack of governance & quality

Now: **229**

In five years: **189**

What are the top three challenges facing residential trades?  
(Number of survey respondents)

Building trust with clients

Now: **109**

In five years: **80**

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# Higher expectations of professionalism

After skills and knowledge, professionalism and honest work ethic were the second most referenced trait that respondents believe the future tradie needs to succeed.

Why? Clients expect emerging trades leaders to run their businesses in a buttoned-up and respectful way, similar to other professional services.

These tradies are also committed to a culture of respect for the work and for people, instead of a casual or vulgar environment, so that they can go home feeling good about what they do every day.

This means branded uniforms and vehicles, prompt and polite conversation, guiding a client through the process, and doing the job well, even when someone isn't checking the quality of the work.

## How would you describe the future tradie?

“Focused on efficiency, working smarter, more professional, prioritises continued learning, promotes a good site culture.”

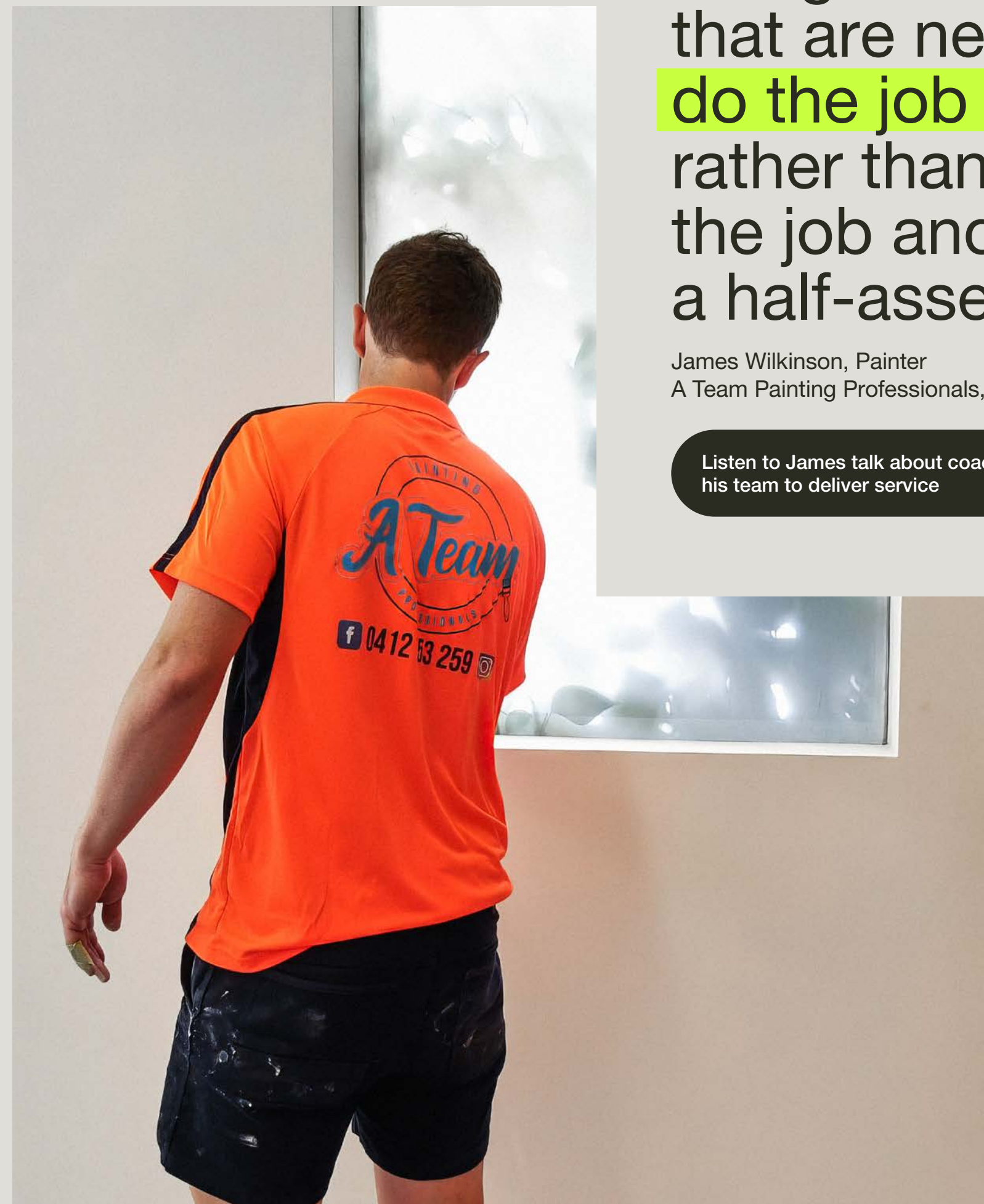
“As tech savvy as they are tool savvy and far more professional in their appearance, already clients are expecting more from the trade services they engage.”

“Professional, clean and tidy, very neat in all aspects of their workmanship. Keep up with training and stay one step ahead of the VBA.”

“Smart and well presented, focused on the job at hand, with professional skills.”

“An experienced and optimistic professional who can see how legislation, code and the regulators affect the industry as a whole - to both the client and service provider.”

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023



“You’re using premium products, you’re doing all the stages that are necessary to **do the job properly,** rather than rushing the job and doing a half-assed job.”

James Wilkinson, Painter  
A Team Painting Professionals, Adelaide, SA

Listen to James talk about coaching his team to deliver service



WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# Changing perceptions of success

There's no one, true way for a tradie to know they have "made it." Many future tradies talk about setting their own goals and having a personal take on success.

Being able to run a business and maintain work-life balance, with a focus on family and self-set goals, makes 25-54 YO business owners feel successful.

Financials don't show up as a key driver for tradies 25-54YO — they play a part, but not as much as having time to invest in family and other goals. Because of this, they care about efficiency and building business systems that run themselves.

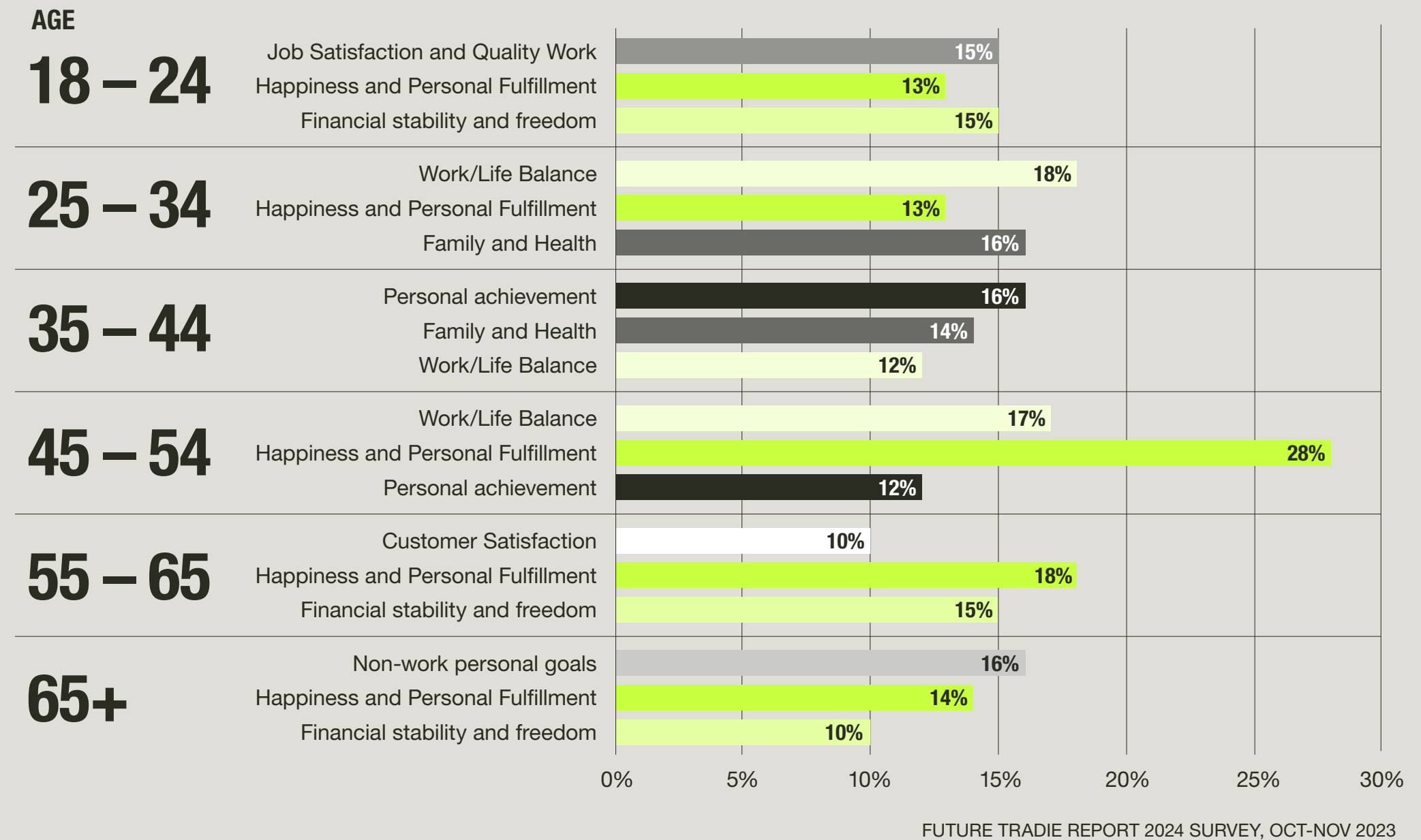
Apprentices and older tradespeople have more in common than they think. Being able to confidently manage your own money and define, then achieve what personally fulfils you connects 18-24YOs & 55+YOs, as they navigate success at either end of their careers.

But these tradies are likely to experience a generational culture clash (check out the Magnetic Culture theme), which means opportunities for positive mentorship are being lost.



Definition of personal success

(% of respondents per age bracket)



“People are so much more woke about where they want to work.

This is more than being a tradie and plunging Mrs Jones’ toilet. They want to work somewhere that has some way of **making a difference.**”

Matthew Zubrinich, Plumber  
Plumbify, Wingfield, SA

Listen to Matt talk about changes in team members' expectations





A TEAM PAINTING PROFESSIONALS

### DESCRIBE THE FUTURE TRADIE



A tradie who is flexible, has integrity and is driven to help customers with their plumbing solutions, not just here to make money.

Plumber, male,  
18-24YO  
West Pennant Hills, NSW



## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

“Feeling like you are using your skills for a purpose that means something to you. Success is measured by how I feel, not how much I make”

Painter, female, 25-34YO, Moffatdale, QLD

“Personal success is being happy, career success is being respected by co-workers and management.”

Plumber, male, 25-34YO, Boronia, VIC

“Success isn’t measured against what anybody else is doing but what you feel gives you a sense of accomplishment and happiness in what you’re doing in life.”

Plumber, male, 25-34YO, Boronia, VIC

“Success is being able to buy property.”

Plumber, male, 35-44YO, Alice Springs, NT



# PERSONAL SUCCESS MEANS

“Success is growing in any condition that is presented to you no matter if it affects you positively or negatively you always learn from it to better yourself/business.”

Plumber, male, 25-34YO, Goode Beach, WA

“Success is being respected within the community. Someone people trust to do the best job possible each time.”

Electrician, female, 25-34YO, Waikerie, SA

“The main thing that makes me feel successful, as clichéd as it sounds, is that every day I’m living in a really happy state.”

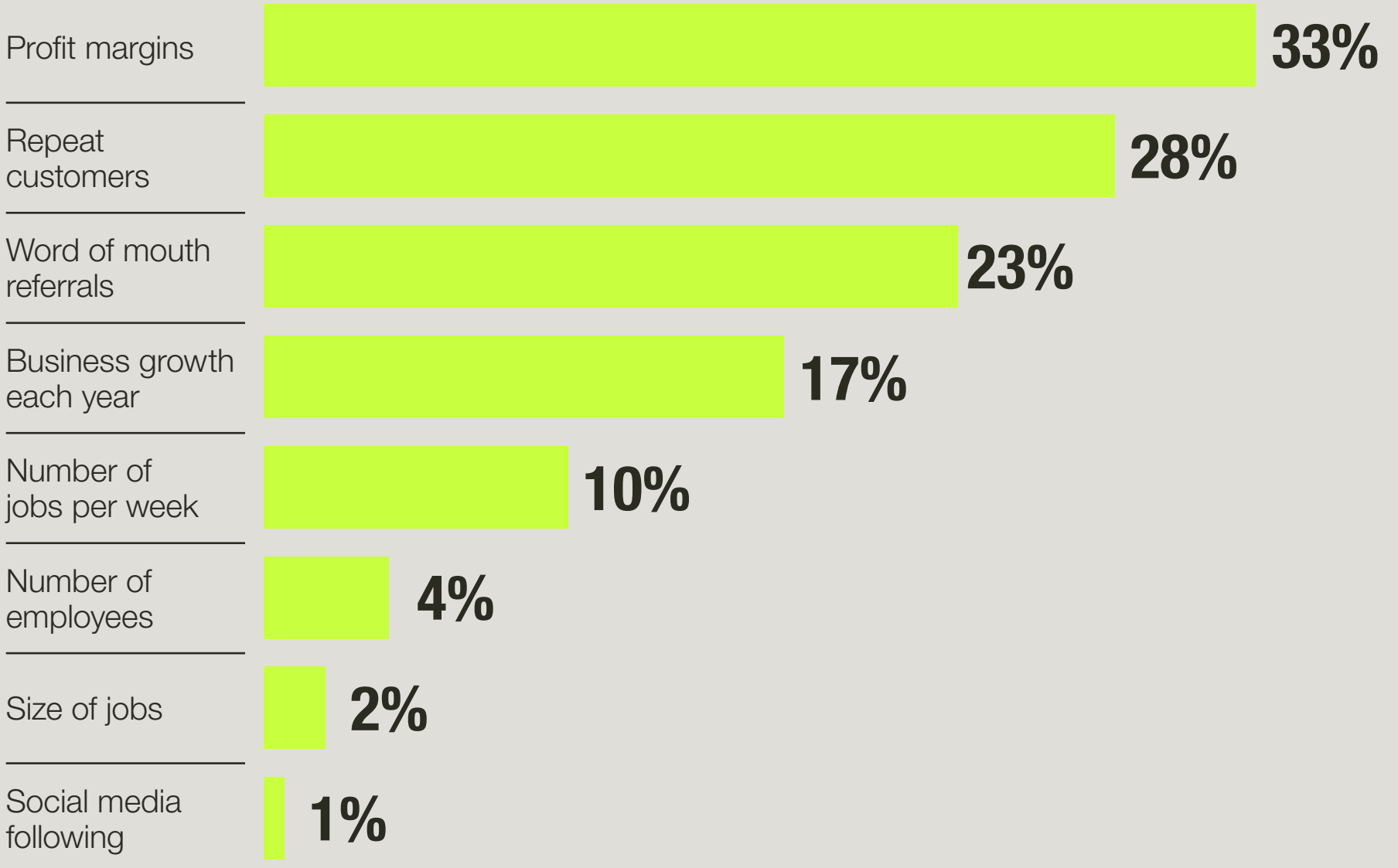
Aimee Stanton, Plumber & tiny home business founder  
Tiny Stays & Zadie Workwear, Melbourne, VIC

Listen to Aimee talk about what makes her feel successful



# WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## Business success means:



Key success indicators of surveyed tradies who see a strong business model as their competitive edge.



ENERGY CULTURE

### Trades define success differently

#### PLUMBERS

# 42%

define business success as **profit margin.**

#### CARPENTERS

# 38%

define business success as **repeat customers.**

#### BUILDERS

# 36%

define business success as **profit margin.**

#### ELECTRICIANS

# 34%

define business success as **repeat customers.**

#### PAINTERS

# 28%

define business success as **repeat customers.**

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# The importance of 1-1 relationships

Tradespeople still value 1-1 relationships. Hitting up a mate to help solve a tricky problem, or having someone show you how it's done bolsters day-to-day learning.

Phone calls and face-to-face rapport are valuable for building healthy team culture. Individuals value chatting through challenges

with an empathetic boss, sharing personal and professional goals, and getting balanced feedback.

Tradies under the age of 35 connect 1-1 and keep an eye on the competition via Instagram and Facebook, and see direct messages to be as personal and important as a phone call.



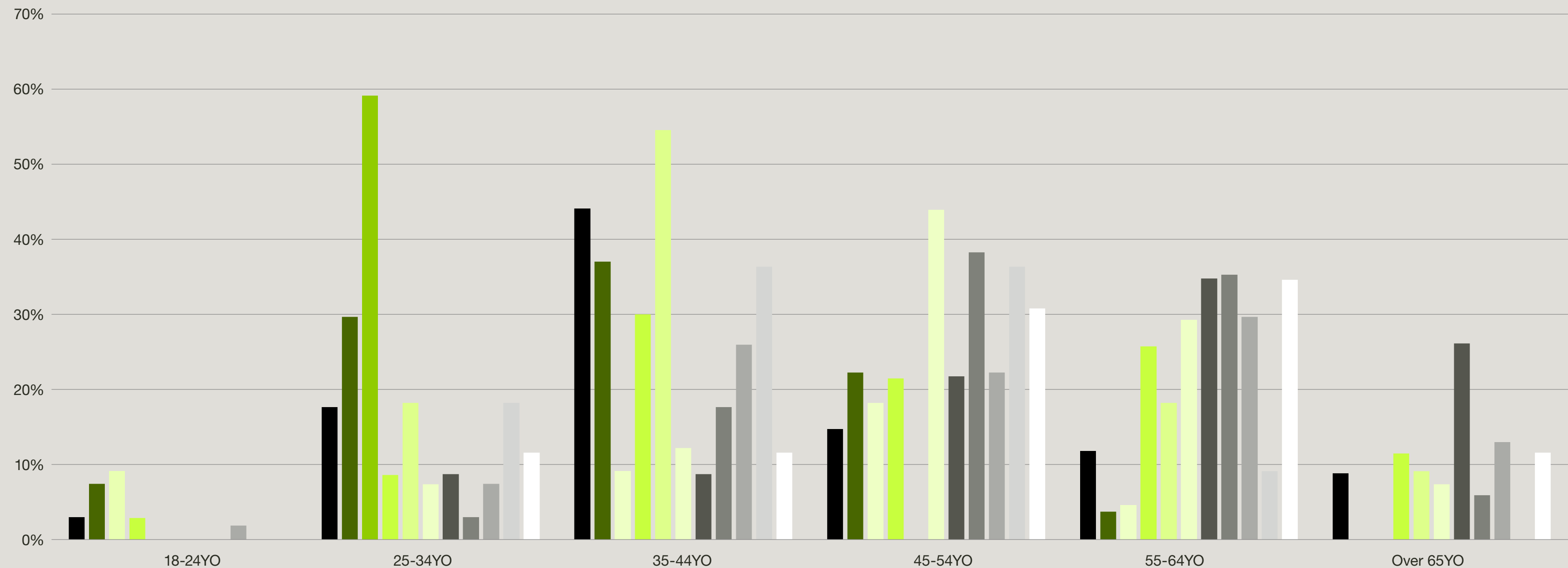
“Creating good relationships, whether it’s with co-workers or subcontractors, you get a lot in return.”

Aimee Stanton, Plumber & tiny home business founder  
Tiny Stays & Zadie Workwear, Melbourne, VIC

Listen to Aimee talk about the importance of 1-1 relationships

## How do you connect with other tradies?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Instagram, Facebook
- Phone calls
- Phone calls, text messages
- Supplier events at a local branch
- Supplier events at a local branch, trade shows
- Text messages
- Text messages, phonecalls
- Text messages, phonecalls, trade shows
- Trade shows



FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# Valuing efficiency, immediacy & rewards

Younger tradies who have grown up in the age of Amazon expect more from suppliers and brands when it comes to online ordering and speedy deliveries.

Good service, to them is being able to get anything, anywhere, anytime.

Those at the beginning of their careers also value loyalty schemes—partly because they don't yet have the cash to spend on lifestyle items they can redeem points for.



EVOBUILT

What appeals to tradies under 35YO?

## 3x more

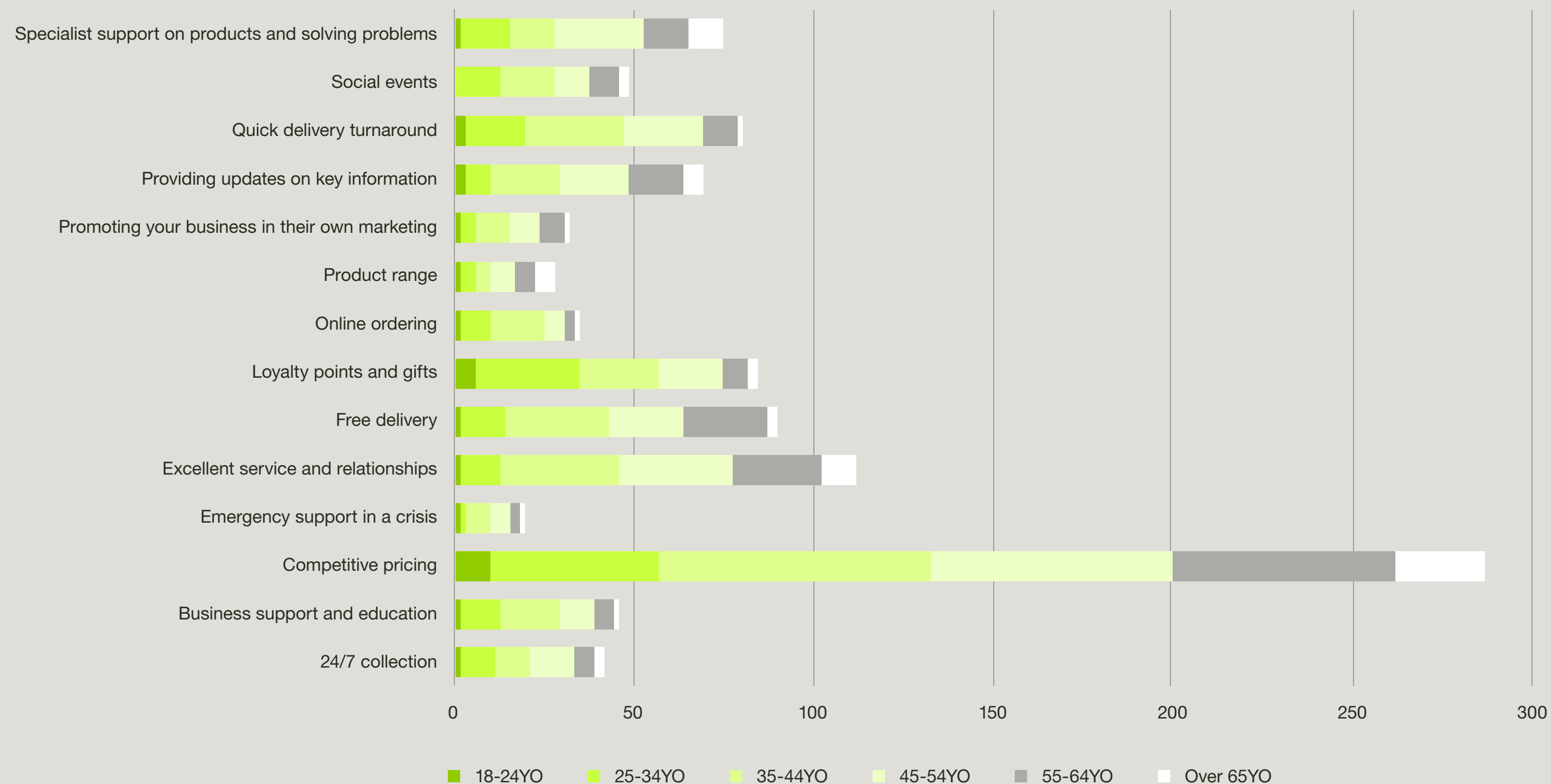
surveyed tradies under 35YO want **loyalty points and gifts**, compared to those 35YO+

Surveyed tradies under 35YO are

## 2.5x more

surveyed tradies under 35YO want **online ordering**, compared to those 35YO+

### What do you wish more suppliers would offer?





**+15%**

increase YOY in  
apprenticeship dropouts  
(Q1 FY22 vs. Q1 FY23)

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH-  
NATIONAL APPRENTICE AND TRAINEE COLLECTION

# Spotlight on trailblazers



**A TEAM PAINTING PROFESSIONALS**

## James Wilkinson

Trade: Painter

Age: 30s

Location: Adelaide, SA

### Professionalism, integrity & patience with clients

James deals with builders and with homeowners, doing a trade where quality and finish can be seen with the naked eye.

As a result, he over-indexes on three values: integrity (honest conversations with clients and team members, detailed quotes and explanations of the end-to-end process); professionalism such as a high-quality website and social media presence; and patience, so that he can step clients through the value they are getting from his business.



**TINY STAYS & ZADIE**

## Aimee Stanton

Trade: Plumber & tiny home business founder

Age: Late 20s

Location: Melbourne, VIC

### Finding your own definition of success

Knowing so many of her peers got into plumbing for the money, Aimee thought that's what success looked like. However when she began to make it big in commercial plumbing, she didn't feel fulfilled. She needed to reconnect with her love of adventure.

Now, her Tiny Stays off-grid holiday rentals business allows her to use hands-on skills and shares her love of adventuring with others. Her version of success taps into balance and quality time, either spent with family, on the tools, or talking to apprentices at TAFE level.



**NEXT GEN CONCRETE & EXCAVATION**

## Joseph Rodriguez

Trade: Concreter

Age: 30s

Location: Melbourne, VIC

### Respect & responsibility, no matter who you are

Early on, Joseph experienced poor communication styles and toxic relationships on site—so he knew what not to do with his own team.

A key rule at Next Gen is to respect whoever you are dealing with, whether they are 20 years into their career, or it's their first day on the job.

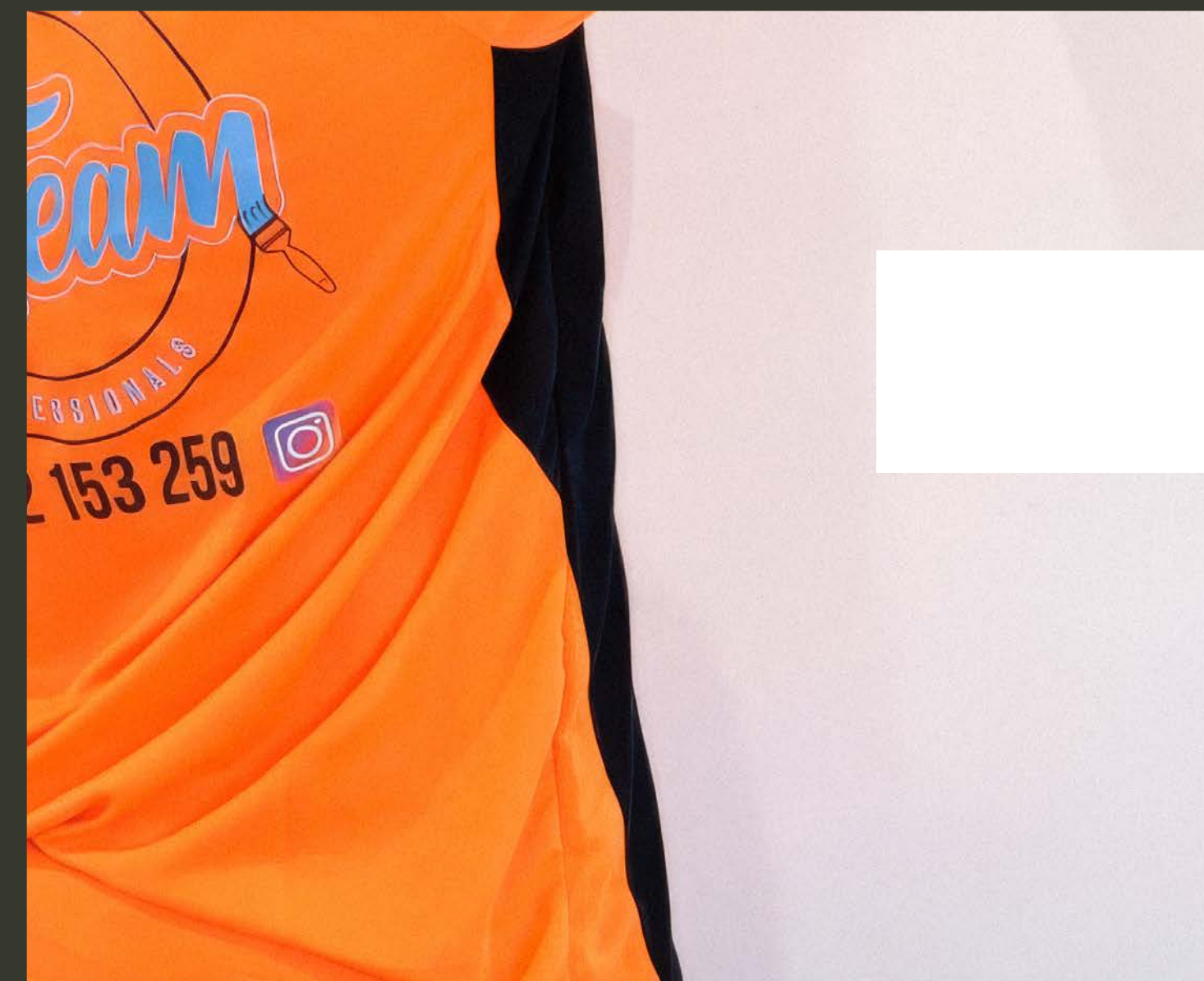
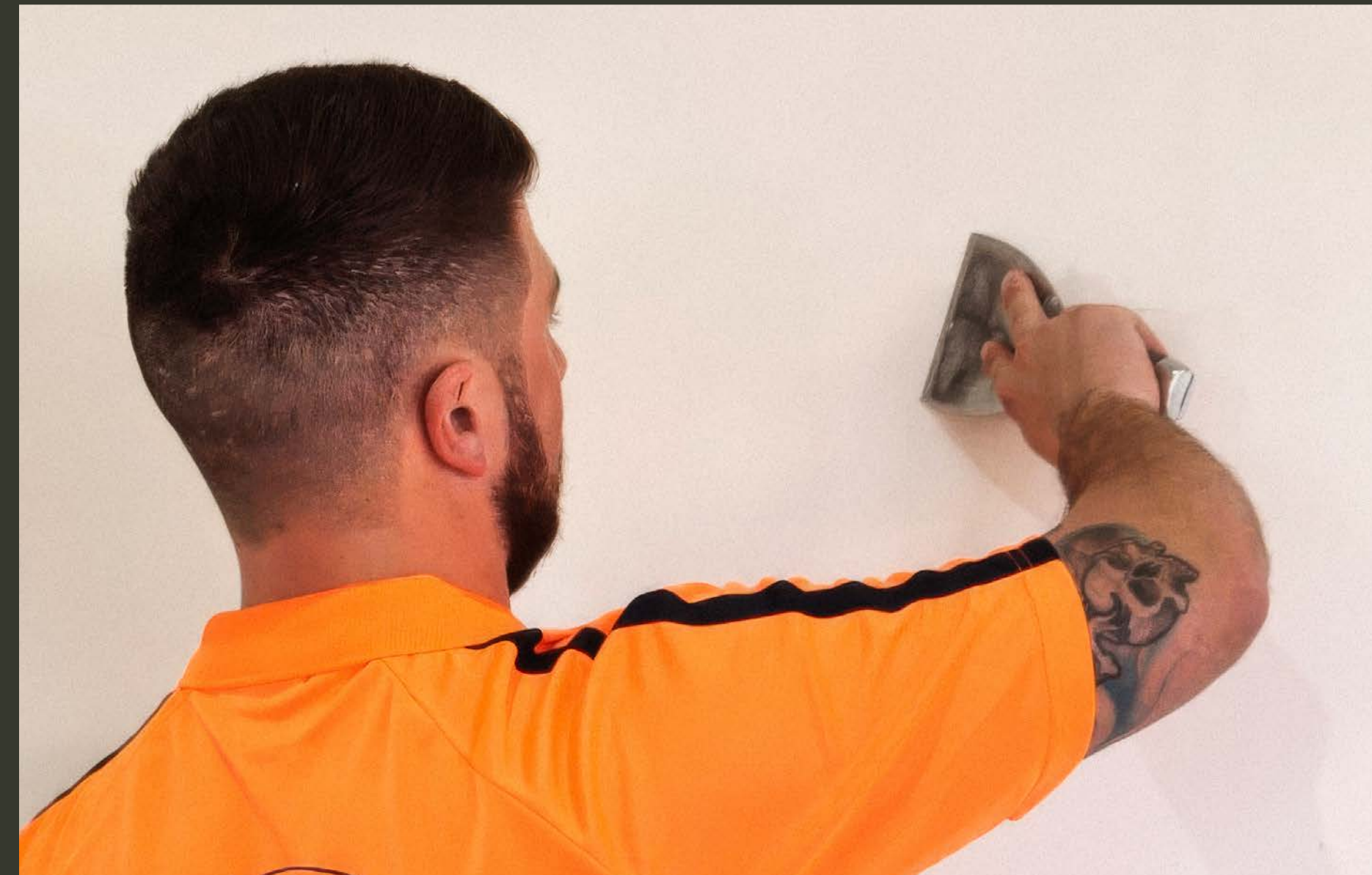
Responsibility is another big topic, whether he's leading by giving others responsibility so they can step up, or taking responsibility for his own role in the business, which is now mostly office-based.

“

I'm there to talk to my team at the beginning, to try and make sure they're learning the proper way.

I teach them as much as I can.

James Wilkinson, Painter  
A Team Painting Professionals



# Opportunities for government and industry bodies

## TO START DOING

Support tradespeople in defining success.

This could look like:

- **Specialist partnerships:** Helping tradespeople find specialists to workshop their vision and success.
- **Measurement tools:** Once you have set success, assistance in monitoring, measuring and celebrating success.

## TO PLAN FOR

Specify what good values look like with an industry code of ethics.

This could look like:

- **An easy-to-use code:** Setting clear standards for professional behaviour, pricing transparency and client relations.
- **Opt-in systems and certifications:** Read the code? Commit to adhering to it through training and certifications.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Values-led business communities for support and mentorship.

This could look like:

- **Mentorship programs:** Connecting experienced tradies with newcomers who can guide them in ethical business practice.
- **Peer support networks:** To discuss the challenges in keeping standards high.



# Opportunities for supplier businesses and brands

## TO START DOING

Highlight stories of tradies doing things differently, to rebuild trust and drive professionalism.

This could look like:

- **Business success case studies:** Stories of integrity, professionalism and transparency, and how they give businesses an edge in a competitive market.
- **Partnering with values-led trades influencers:** New icons for a new way of working.

## TO PLAN FOR

Systems that enable transparency and build trust between tradies and their customers.

This could look like:

- **Transparent quoting and invoicing:** Helping demystify why jobs cost what they do.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Training in ethical and respectful business practices.

This could look like:

- **Supportive tips:** How to tackle diversity and inclusion, communication, and fair and respectful client relations.
- **Partnering with expert NFPs:** For support with ethics and diversity, the way many brands do for mental health.

# Opportunities for trades small businesses

## TO START DOING

### Define your business vision and values.

This could look like:

- **Create a vision:** Working with a business coach to help create a vision for your business and a way to bring this to life through your service.
- **Business values:** Put together values your business stands for and share it with your team, encouraging everyone to apply them.
- **Service first business:** Think about your business as both expertise and service lead.
- **Communication:** Create smooth communications between yourself and the people you work with.

## TO PLAN FOR

### Build transparency and respect.

This could look like:

- **Price transparency:** Utilise systems to offer transparent pricing to you customers so that they can make inform decisions.
- **Work with partners:** Work with partners for tasks like quoting to build customer trust in the value of your work.
- **Communication during the job:** Share updates about the work through photos, videos and text messages.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

### Equip you and your team through further education and training.

This could look like:

- **Training in working** with diverse teams and inclusive service.
- **Ethical business training:** Learning what this means for your team and your business.
- **Service standards:** Creating service standards of professionalism for your team; how you behave, respond to queries, greet customer on the job, etc

# 03

# SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

Tradespeople know they need to build sustainably and want pocket-friendly, practical solutions.

Adapting existing properties, reducing energy consumption and waste, and advising homeowners about making good choices are part of the job. Builders especially think in 30+ year timeframes, not 10-year warranties.



ENERGY CULTURE

# Sustainable building summary

TROUT | nex+ | SUPERSEED

## WHAT IT IS

Tradespeople know they need to build sustainably and want pocket-friendly, practical solutions.

Adapting existing properties, reducing energy consumption and waste, and advising homeowners about making good choices are part of the job. Builders especially think in 30+ year timeframes, not 10-year warranties.

## WHAT'S DRIVING IT

- Attitudes to sustainability are changing; trades want to be sustainable, but need to balance budget, deadlines, know-how and effort
- Residential building demands are on the up; how can we build quickly, affordably and sustainably?
- Tradies are beginning to understand that their industry has a lot to lose; warmer days mean less working hours and increased OH&S risks
- Perceptions of value and longevity are changing, from disposable projects that only last for five, seven or 10 year warranties, to 30+ year lifespans and materials that can be reused or recycled
- Adoption of solar, electric and smart homes is increasing, thanks to changes in codes for new buildings, affordability of tech and rebates

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Tradespeople specialising in household energy consumption, transitioning away from gas, and energy storage are on the cusp of a retrofit boom
- Increased number of customers based on specialists with a proven track record
- Some tradies will save on business costs long-term by switching to EVs



## THE FUTURE TRADIE

Builds sustainable practices into their business model, even if that means starting small with responsible changes.

Understands state-specific rebates, so they can help clients navigate them.

Advises homeowners on the best solution for their property, based on energy and water usage.

Uses salvaged, recycled and reusable products and materials for some projects, so long as they are high quality and easy to work with.

Does quality work that lasts 30+ years where possible.

Maintains client relationships to ensure their building work holds up.

Looks overseas for products and techniques that meet higher standards, eg. European codes, instead of Australian codes.

Expects brands and suppliers to help educate clients in sustainable solutions and considerations.

Dedicates time to learning new, sustainable ways of doing things, eg. passive homes, insulated roofing.

Looks to modular systems as a solution that's on the horizon, but not yet in their arsenal.

IMAGE: CAMERON & CLARISSA BETTS, HUMAN ELECTRICAL DESIGN

# What is sustainable building?

Sustainability in trades small businesses is complex.

It's a matter of sizing up cost, wastage, how long a solution will last, how easy it is to work with and **how energy efficient it is.**

In residential building, shifts are happening towards low-carbon, low-energy, adaptable homes that don't need to be demolished as their owners' needs change.

Tradespeople are passionate about playing their part. Niche interests in passive homes, solar, and energy storage drive tradies to source quality solutions, looking overseas to progressive standards for what's to come in Australian mandates.

Younger tradies are more eager to work sustainably, or at least try to.

Sustainability and environmental awareness ranked higher than embracing technology, or collaboration or finding reliable partners, in characteristics that the future tradie will need to succeed (12%, vs. 10% and 2% respectively).



HUMAN ELECTRIC DESIGN

## 47%

of Australians are less likely to spend money on living sustainably due to the **cost of living crisis.**

## 44%

of Australians are actively looking for **greener products or services.**

FINDER. (2023). FINDER GREEN REPORT. RETRIEVED NOVEMBER 27, 2023. GREEN-REPORT-JUNE-2023.

## 20%

of tradies who see working in a **specialised niche** as their competitive edge are focusing on **sustainability.**

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023



HUMAN ELECTRIC DESIGN

64%

of surveyed tradies under 35YO are either using sustainable working practices, or trying to.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

## FORCES DRIVING IT



CLIMATE &amp; SUSTAINABILITY

## Labouring stands to lose out

Government forecasts predict a 0.8 per cent reduction in labour productivity if temperatures rise by four degrees by 2063, with agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and construction all affected.

Buildings will also need to be more resilient to bushfires, floods and extreme weather conditions, which requires tradies to upskill in new materials and skills.

Hotter days mean fewer working hours, a greater risk of heat stroke and other safety risks, and the need for new ways of building and maintaining, all of which trades small businesses will be responsible for.

### Is sustainability a business owner's responsibility?

For some, yes. Holistic responsibility for people, planet and profit is how they view working with integrity.

Those who are confident or curious with adopting sustainable practices are 8% more likely to support mentally resilient tradies, compared to those who don't care about environmental impact.



Of those surveyed who work in residential building (new homes and renovations):

**30%**

are actively engaging in sustainable practice

AN ADDITIONAL

**34%**

are trying to engage in sustainable practice

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

“We don't have the luxury of a big gum tree to shade us for half the day.

We are lucky to have a speck of grass, so **it's full sun all day.**”

Joseph Rodriguez, Concreter  
Next Gen Concrete & Excavation

Listen to Joseph talk about working in extreme weather conditions



## FORCES DRIVING IT

 ECONOMIC

 POPULATION

 LEGISLATIVE

## Financial sustainability vs. residential building demands

Government backed housing quotas, 7 star climate standards in the 2023 National Construction Code and improved residential accessibility standards create a perfect storm for a workforce that is struggling to deal with other changes and an increasing cost of doing business.

As a result, many tradespeople aren't confident about the path forward. Those working in the residential sector are expecting to shift into doing more commercial work in five years' time, driven by longer contracts, stable workflow and better pay.

Modular building and 3D printed construction are tools for big players (eg. Modspace's Essendon factory) but they aren't hitting small businesses yet.

The big ticket question is, how might we rapidly and sustainably build more homes, when reliable team members are scarce and tradies plan to exit the residential sector?

There are

# 10.9m

dwellings in Australia.

Most don't meet new **7 star climate standards.**



# 29%

of surveyed tradies are confident in building in new ways to meet **affordable housing demands.**

It was the **lowest ranked** of 11 key capabilities for future tradies.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024  
SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

# 40%

of surveyed tradies under 45YO who anticipate change, expect to do **more commercial** work in five years time—meaning fewer tradies building residential homes.

“They’re not making accessible housing provisions publicly known to consumers.

Instead, builders are going to give the **bad news** that now you can't have steppers and pavers in your front yard.”

Bek Bishop, Builder  
Elite Building Services

Listen to Bek talk about affordable housing, logging regulations and accessibility code challenges





“

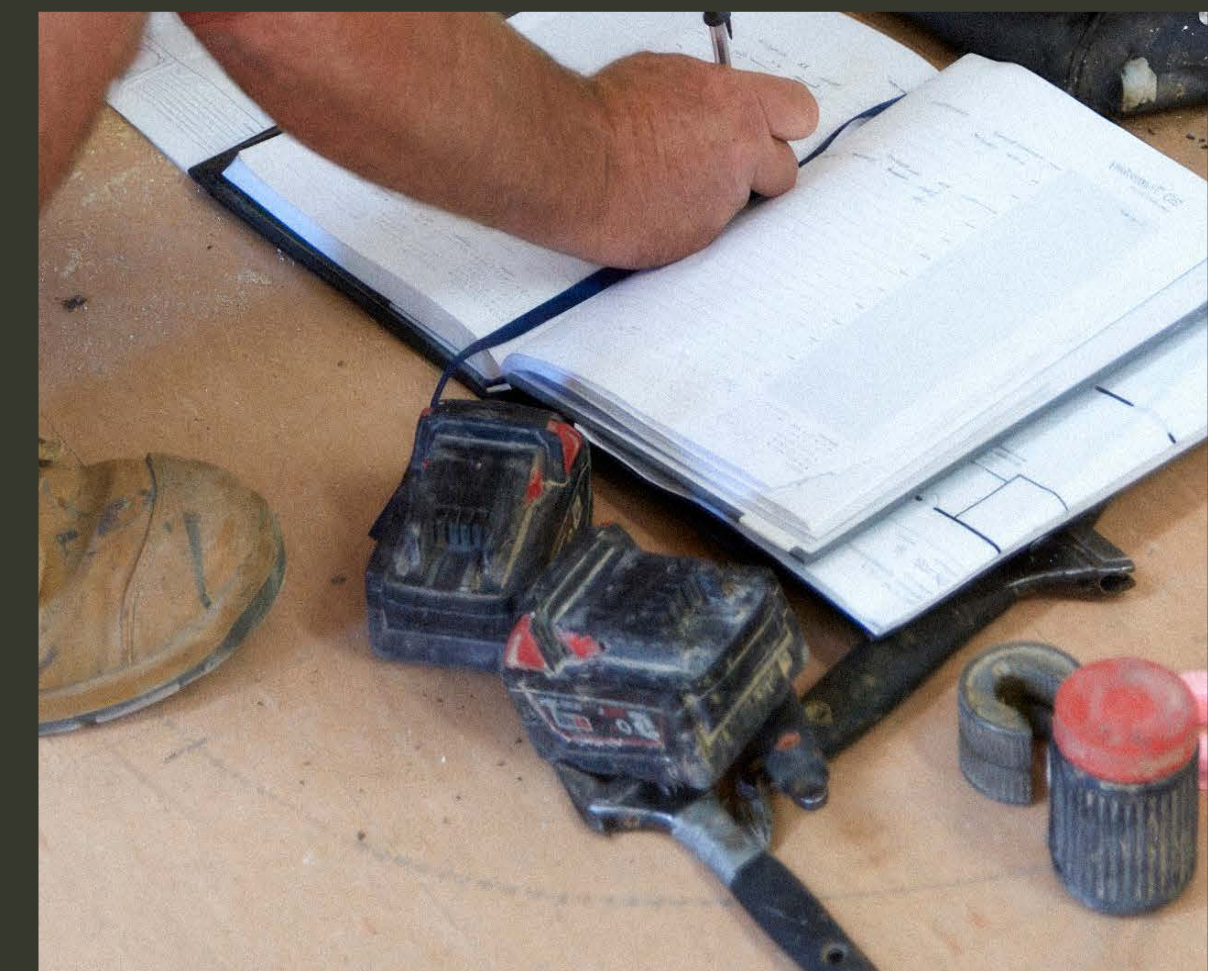
We all want a better world,  
more sustainable.

But some of the practices seem to  
involve a lot of producing themselves?

Are they a lot more expensive,  
when it is SO enormously difficult  
to make any money as it is?

It is only if you get the very rich  
clients can you make a difference.

Carpenter, male  
45-54YO  
Armidale, NSW



## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## Solar, electric, smart & accessible retrofitting

Governments phasing out gas, clean energy rebates and high fuel prices all contribute to demand for solar-powered homes and three-phase EV charging stations.

Tradespeople who work in the sector are passionate about it. The majority of consumers don't know what they don't know—they need help stepping through benefits and future scenarios.

Rebates are a handy way of helping customers pay for retrofit work—so long as you know the in's and out's of current eligibility.

Bombarded by information overload, consumers are relying heavily on trades to help them navigate everything, from product compatibility, to safety issues, to monitoring their home's electricity usage through smart tech.

Tradies who can coach clients through options and recommend products that deliver sustainability and experience will win in a growing retrofit market.

Customer-friendly education materials that help tradies sell to the end consumer are where brands can play a useful role.

Do tradespeople want to provide solutions to homeowners that save money by using less energy?

**46%** of surveyed tradies are confident doing this

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023



“Sustainability and smart homes has been at the forefront for a long time.

And the beauty is now it's getting simpler, it's getting modular, more affordable, something that you can add on to an existing home, making it more user friendly and **energy efficient.**”

Cameron & Clarissa Betts, Electrician  
Human Electrical Design

Watch Cameron & Clarissa talk about sustainable building & living



40%

of surveyed tradies are curious about providing solutions to homeowners that save them money by **using less energy**— a huge opportunity for helpful education & product solutions.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023



HUMAN ELECTRIC DESIGN

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## Shifting perceptions of value & waste

A large proportion of materials are wasted in construction, building and maintenance processes because there isn't yet an easy, time-efficient way to salvage and reuse them.

Tradies know this and are open to using tools and materials that can be redeployed, provided they are good quality and don't require significant re-skilling.

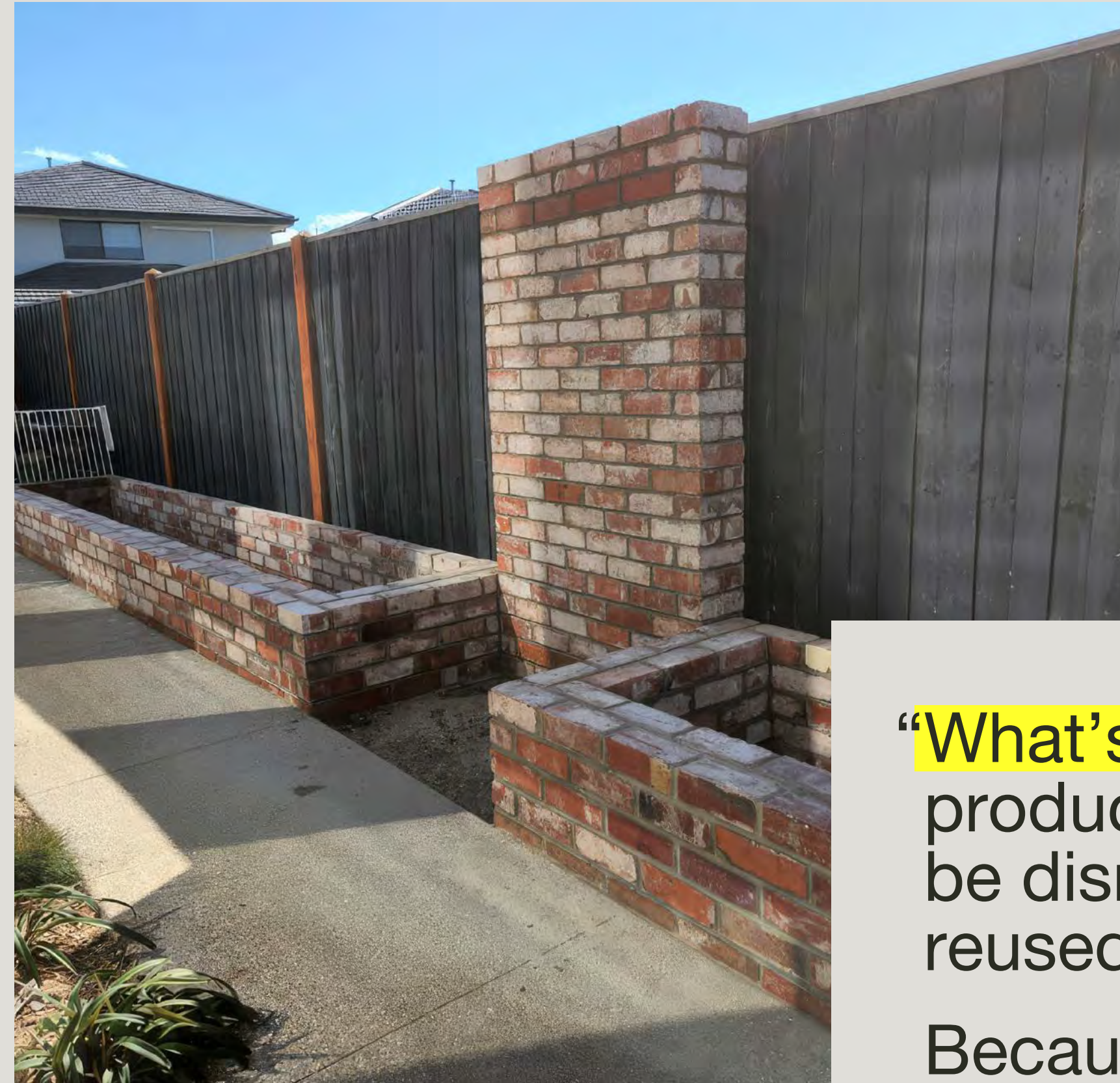
As new building technologies make the circular economy accessible, a shift in value perception is on its way.

The least wasteful job is the job that lasts the longest, thanks to quality parts, knowledge, care and skill.

# 17%

of surveyed tradies believe a lack of governance and quality control will be one of the top three issues they will face over the next five years.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023



TY SIENNA, BRICKS BY TY



“What’s the lifecycle of the product look like? Can it be dismantled? Can it be reused for other purposes?”

Because that is sustainability in our industry. Not just a brick home, with an attitude of “knock it down and build another one.”

Toby Loft, Builtgrid

Listen to Toby talk about changing sustainable practices



## WHAT WE ARE SEEING



## 30+ year building lifespans

Future tradies look beyond the five, seven and 10-year product and building warranties, instead building for 30+ year lifespans.

Sometimes, this means investing in a more expensive product or more time-consuming way of getting the job done up-front—then planning ahead for how the property will need to adapt as the owner ages.

Most tradies support this but face pressures around speed and cost which can lead to wasteful compromises.

Those who do commit to building for longevity expect their business to be around for the lifetime of the building (rather than phoenixing). They maintain relationships with property owners to ensure their work holds up, delivering long-term custodianship.

# 50%

of surveyed tradies who are confident in using **new technologies** are also invested in **working sustainably**.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

“We use a very safe and efficient product that has a really long warranty, and we are also **educated** about what we do and how to look after them in the future”

Joe Edginton, Electrician  
Energy Culture

Listen Joe talk about  
building for longevity



ENERGY CULTURE

“ A building built well is a far more sustainable practice when not being pulled apart every 10 years because it’s breaking down.

Plumber, male  
35-44YO  
Springfield, QLD



EVOBUILT

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# Passive & climate positive homes

Passive homes are the pinnacle of long-term sustainable properties. Some Australian builders are specialising in Certified Passive Houses, custom-built for clients who have the capital to invest in them.

Climate positive buildings, which have a positive effect by absorbing carbon, aren't quite here yet—but they soon will be.

Savvy boutique home builders are looking to Europe (where building code standards are higher) for innovations, then building local peer networks to work with new supplier products in Australia.

Hands-on expertise installing roofing, windows and doors is especially sought-after, because correct installation is key to a building's airtightness.

Manufacturers that provide on-site training win by getting their products into the hands of these frontrunners, who become advocates.

**43%** of surveyed tradies are curious about sustainable practices that deliver resilient homes.

Joint 2nd place, behind "Working with innovative suppliers to adopt new products".

Only 35% are confident in building sustainably.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY OF 1,071 TRADIES, OCT-NOV 2023.



ELITE BUILDING SERVICES

How are passive homes different to climate positive homes?

### PASSIVE HOME

A passive home is appropriately insulated, airtight, has quality windows, reliable ventilation systems and recovers heat.

This means it uses less energy for heating and cooling, protects against humidity and is (almost) airtight.

### CLIMATE POSITIVE HOME

A climate positive home actively improves the environment around it by removing additional CO<sup>2</sup> from the atmosphere.

That includes all the carbon it takes to power, sustain, and build the building, and any carbon associated with manufacturing, material sourcing, maintenance and machinery needed to get the job done.

[AUS GOV YOUR HOME GUIDE TO ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE HOMES](#)

“If I was talking to young builders today, I'd be saying to look at passive housing, look at sustainability. **That is the way of the future.**”

And if you're not looking at those things, you're going to definitely get left behind.”

Bek Bishop, Builder  
Elite Building Services

Listen to Bek talk about the future market for passive housing



# Spotlight on trailblazers



## ENERGY CULTURE

### Joe Edginton

Trade: Electrician & solar specialist

Age: mid 40's

Location: Sydney, NSW

#### Part passion, part common sense

Ten years ago, Joe discovered renewable energy and decided that he would use his electrical skills to specialise in solar.

He loves servicing people's homes with a product that makes their life better by lowering their energy bills. He is proud to use a renewable technology that preserves Sydney's northern beaches where he works.

Joe's whole team has a passion for sustainable solar solutions, from helping clients find the right kit to providing ongoing service. This is core to the business's culture—they don't see sustainability as a niche, instead it's just common sense.



## HUMAN ELECTRICAL DESIGN

### Cameron & Clarissa Betts

Trade: Electrician & interior design

Age: early 40's

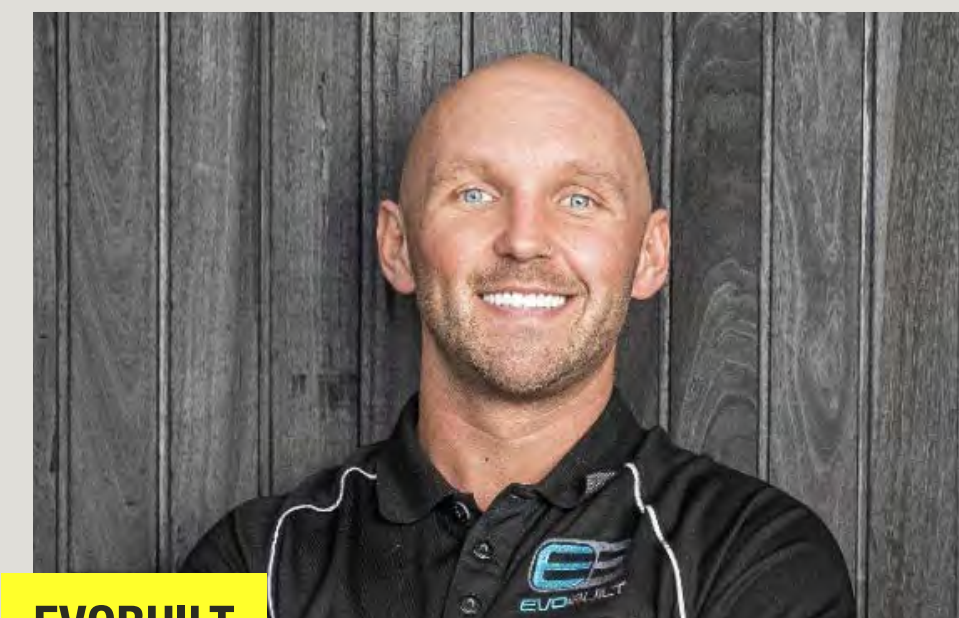
Location: Montrose, VIC

#### Getting ahead of energy trends, infrastructure & mandates

Cameron and Clarissa started out bringing their skills together with a vision for running a successful electrical business. But as their business has matured, they see staying ahead of trends and legislation as part of good planning.

HED is gearing up for decentralised energy distribution to become the norm. As more homes run on electricity (not gas) and electric vehicles make energy storage accessible, they have upped their knowledge and rebranded an area of their business to focus on EVs.

Being prepared for the future means they won't suffer when codes and infrastructure changes.



## EVOBUILT

### Robby Kruyer

Trade: Builder

Age: mid 30's

Location: Rowville, VIC

#### Selling long-term value, not short-term gains

Robby believes that a major part of sustainability is building for the long term, instead of treating buildings as disposable.

Having done his accreditation in passive homes, he knows passive techniques may cost more and take longer to install,

However, helping clients see the long-term value of building a sustainable home is well worth it.



# Opportunities for government and industry bodies

## TO START DOING

Distill new legislation and standards into easy-to-understand guides for tradies.

This could look like:

- **Translating targets:** Help tradespeople understand what targets for energy rated homes mean for their business, in terms of new skills, team growth and specialisations.
- **Support systems:** Provide easy-to-use guides, and access to reps who can answer questions quickly, so projects can get moving.

## TO PLAN FOR

Education and certifications in building sustainably.

This could look like:

- **How to make changes:** Practical advice about how to switch to more sustainable products and methods.
- **Shifting the mindset on longevity:** Why is building for 30+ years better? How to get teams and clients on board.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Increase demand and access to sustainable products and methods.

This could look like:

- **Affordable sustainable products:** Sustained rebates, supported with public information to drive client interest.
- **Guidelines around virgin materials vs. recycled materials:** To shift industry norms and create pressure on product suppliers.
- **Business grants:** For suppliers and manufacturers looking to innovate in this area.

# Opportunities for supplier businesses and brands

## TO START DOING

Source sustainable and adaptable products; share the how and why.

This could look like:

- **Branded product ranges:** To make it easier for trades to find sustainable products.
- **Ranking systems:** So that clients and professionals can make informed choices.
- **Decoding sustainability:** Educational information that decodes the how and why of sustainable products.

## TO PLAN FOR

Build circular economy options into your services.

This could look like:

- **Recycling centres:** Options to recycle materials at your depots.
- **Buy-back schemes:** Incentivise customers to return old products that can be reused or recycled.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Low-cost sustainable product ranges.

This could look like:

- **Sustainable everyday/frequent-use products:** To help tradespeople make an impact via something they use regularly.
- **Energy-efficient products:** To help tradespeople lessen their energy impact.
- **Rethinking disposable products:** What could be transformed into a reusable product, to prevent wastage?

# Opportunities for trades small businesses

## TO START DOING

Start small, be practical and passionate.

This could look like:

- **Making a team effort:** Educating your team on basic codes and vocabulary.
- **Reward better decision-making:** Challenging team members to come up with new, more sustainable ways of doing things.

## TO PLAN FOR

Continue to learn about new products and sustainable practices.

This could look like:

- **Embedding new ideas:** Keep across the latest products and practices, and build the best ones into how you work, eg. through product suggestions, waste disposal techniques or checklists for decision making.
- **Ask your suppliers:** What's the latest they have in sustainable products?

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Complete certifications in practices such as passive housing.

This could look like:

- **Accreditations:** Learn how to do it, then apply your knowledge to client jobs.
- **Peer-to-peer sharing:** Find someone else who has used a sustainable method, and get them to share everything they know.

04

# TRADIE HOSPITALITY

Next gen maintenance trades are polished professional service providers. They develop lifelong relationships with clients who value care and hospitality.

Reputation is everything, making every client interaction count.



ZEBRA PLUMBING

# Tradie hospitality summary

## WHAT IT IS

Next gen maintenance trades are polished professional service providers. They develop lifelong relationships with clients who value care and hospitality.

Reputation is everything, making every client interaction count.

## WHAT'S DRIVING IT

- Tilt towards maintenance jobs as homeowners stick with what they've got due to economic pressures
- Bespoke building being more of a luxury experience than ever, again due to economic pressures
- Trades who deliver A+ hospitality being able to charge more with fewer pricing challenges from clients, focusing on white-glove service in affluent postcodes

- Service being viewed as a skill, which requires distinct coaching and mindset, separate to trade skills, which requires distinct coaching and mindset
- Access to tech that extends the customer experience and delivers added value, eg. BIM files and virtual walk-throughs allowing clients to view jobs remotely

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Ongoing relationships with clients = reduced effort of winning new leads
- Boosted brand awareness due to distinctive vehicles and uniforms
- Positive word of mouth drives organic leads rather than investing in direct marketing
- Increased profit margins due to less client questioning and challenging



## THE FUTURE TRADIE

Invests in training their team in client service skills, so their reputation is maintained.

Hires ahead so that new starters have time for training and don't damage their brand's reputation.

Monitors feedback and client satisfaction, so they know what's working and what needs improvement.

Encourages positive reviews and word of mouth referrals to save on marketing costs.

Uses technology and automation to improve client experience and team communications.

Paces expansion of their business, so they can get it 100% right before servicing clients.

Actively expands into affluent postcodes.

Maintains their brand, website and social media channels, and invests in uniform and vehicles that stand out on the road.

Cleans up after themselves, so their client always has a flawless experience.

Aims for \$1.5-2million builds, delivered with care and finesse.

Adds memorable touchpoints to their client's journey, such as branded home handover kits, branded personal gifts and 1-1 calls.

Provides clients with BIM files, virtual walk-throughs and digital photography/videography, showing behind, front of wall and various stages of the process.

IMAGE: BEK BISHOP, ELITE BUILDING SERVICES

# What is tradie hospitality?

As volume-home gigs and extravagant renovations drop off, there is a hollowing out of the residential market.

Tradies who aren't moving into commercial properties are either moving into higher-end home builds, or increased maintenance jobs.

Repeat maintenance jobs are a profitable stream of income as more homeowners plan to live longer in their properties. Service and hospitality are prioritised as ways to win repeat work & positive word-of mouth.

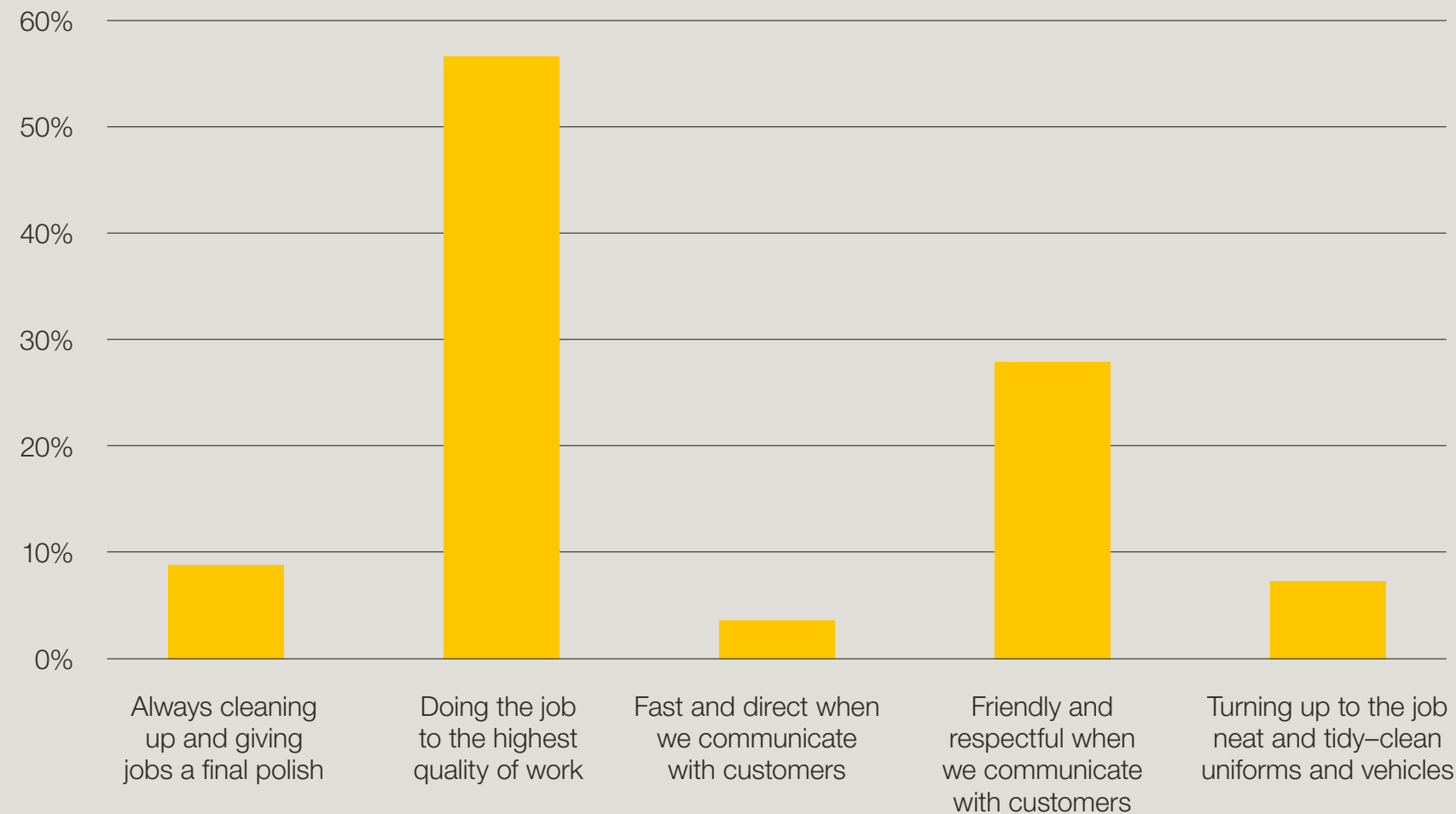
For clients who can afford to build from scratch, it's a luxury. Rising labour and material costs are sweetened by an elevated service experience that makes the process feel 'worth it'.

Going the extra mile in service reinforces the quality and expertise of the finished product and reminds clients that trades care about their home, which is one of the most important and costly things they will ever invest in.

**41%** of surveyed tradies see service excellence as their company's competitive advantage

## How do tradies define service excellence?

(% of respondents who see their business advantage as service excellence)



A TEAM PAINTING PROFESSIONALS

# FORCES DRIVING IT

- ECONOMIC
- POPULATION
- TECHNOLOGY

## Demand for maintenance

New residential builds are down 10.4% YOY due to increasing materials costs and unfavourable building timelines driven by labour demands.

The flipside is that maintenance work and renovations are picking up pace, with the value of work for alterations and additions to existing homes increasing by 3% YOY.

Australians are opting to maintain what they've got, adapting spaces as families evolve, or making their homes more accessible so owners can age in place.

Homeowners want to avoid downtime, mess and disruption. Maintenance tradies' clients want efficient, hospitable service that keeps them informed every step of the way.

ABS, SEPTEMBER 2023



EVOBUILT

What used to be blue-collar 'parts and labour' is now a professional service, delivered with care and respect.

## FORCES DRIVING IT

“Confident face to face communication with clients. Going the extra mile to support the customer and their needs.”

“Fewer large businesses and more small teams who care about service.”

“Focus on Customer Service not self interest.”

“Be polite to customers. No swearing on site and always greet them with a smile.”



BRICKS BY TY

# FUTURE TRADIE SERVICE STANDARDS

“I have to always smile and be polite in front of customers and do my best in my work. We need to value our customers' homes.”

“Treat each customer as you would treat your Mum.”

“Be more people focused. As if the client was your mum.”

“They take care in communicating with their clients and always offer multiple solutions to an issue to the client can make a cost efficient and informed choice.”



## FORCES DRIVING IT

# Bespoke builds increase in cost – Service needs to level-up to increased building costs

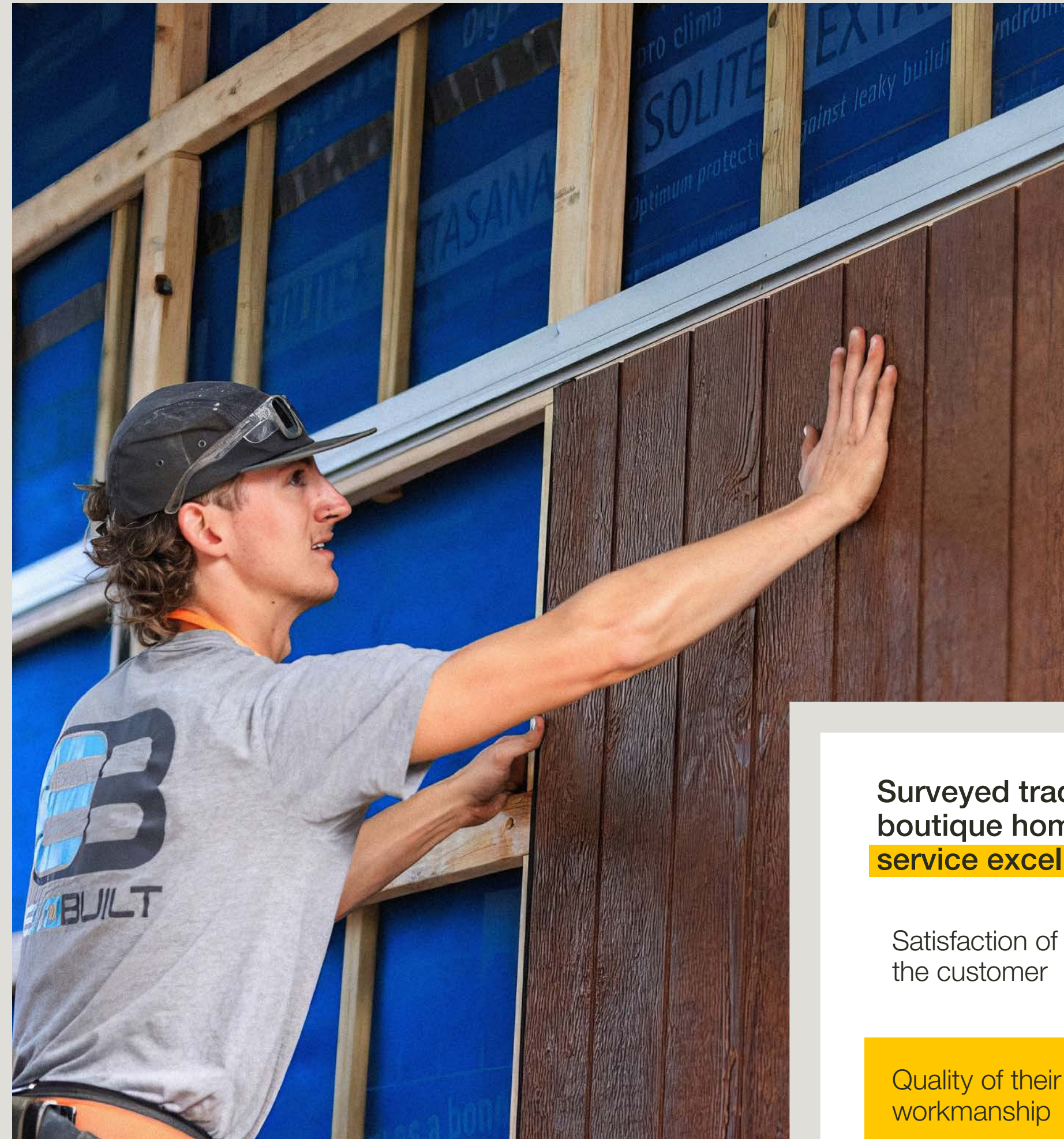
Increased materials, wages and borrowing costs mean bespoke new builds cost more and are perceived as luxury.

Anecdotally, several boutique home builders told us there's a class of customer who has a seven-figure sum ready to go to build their dream home. They will pay more for quality, sustainability, smart tech and elevated design features.

The sweet spot for these builders is \$1.5-2mil projects, delivered with added service touches such as regular digital updates, virtual tours, and branded handover kits.

Think: Touchpoints that borrow from luxury brands to make homeowners feel like they get what they pay for, every step of the way.

Handover kits that tell a beautiful story about the property, personal phonecalls to keep the client updated, and virtual systems that allow the property owner to see the build happening from wherever they are embody this.



EVOBUILT



Surveyed tradies working in boutique home building describe **service excellence** as:

Satisfaction of the customer

**18%**

Quality of their workmanship

**16%**

“

When someone builds a home, that's probably the largest spend they'll ever make.

It's not something I take lightly. You've got to do it justice.

Bek Bishop, Builder  
Elite Building Services



ELITE BUILDING SERVICES

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# Higher service standards = better profits

Tradespeople who tune into their business metrics see the correlation between good service, positive word of mouth, and their ability to charge healthy fees per job.



Surveyed tradies who say service excellence gives them an edge, view success as:

Profit & reputation

21%

Business growth

17%

Family health

15%

Service excellence allows them to achieve steady profit margins, repeat customers & word of mouth referrals.

Service excellence is the #1 way trades win for:

**PAINTERS**

52%

believe providing an excellent service for clients is what makes their company competitive

**ELECTRICIANS**

46%

believe providing an excellent service for clients is what makes their company competitive

**BUILDERS**

40%

believe providing an excellent service for clients is what makes their company competitive

**CARPENTERS**

39%

believe providing an excellent service for clients is what makes their company competitive

**PLUMBERS**

38%

believe providing an excellent service for clients is what makes their company competitive



Builder, female  
25-34YO  
Carnegie, VIC

“ I would define success as repeat clients or word of mouth clients.

You have to be doing something right if people recommend and come back.



TINY STAYS | ZADIE

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# Profitable postcodes & white-glove service

Savvy maintenance tradies are basing their businesses within wealthy postcodes, where appreciation of service and disposable income are higher.

Many of these homeowners are shopping with retailers who offer “white glove service”—installation assistance provided with an elevated level of care and attention to detail, for items such as white goods—and expect the same from other services they pay for.

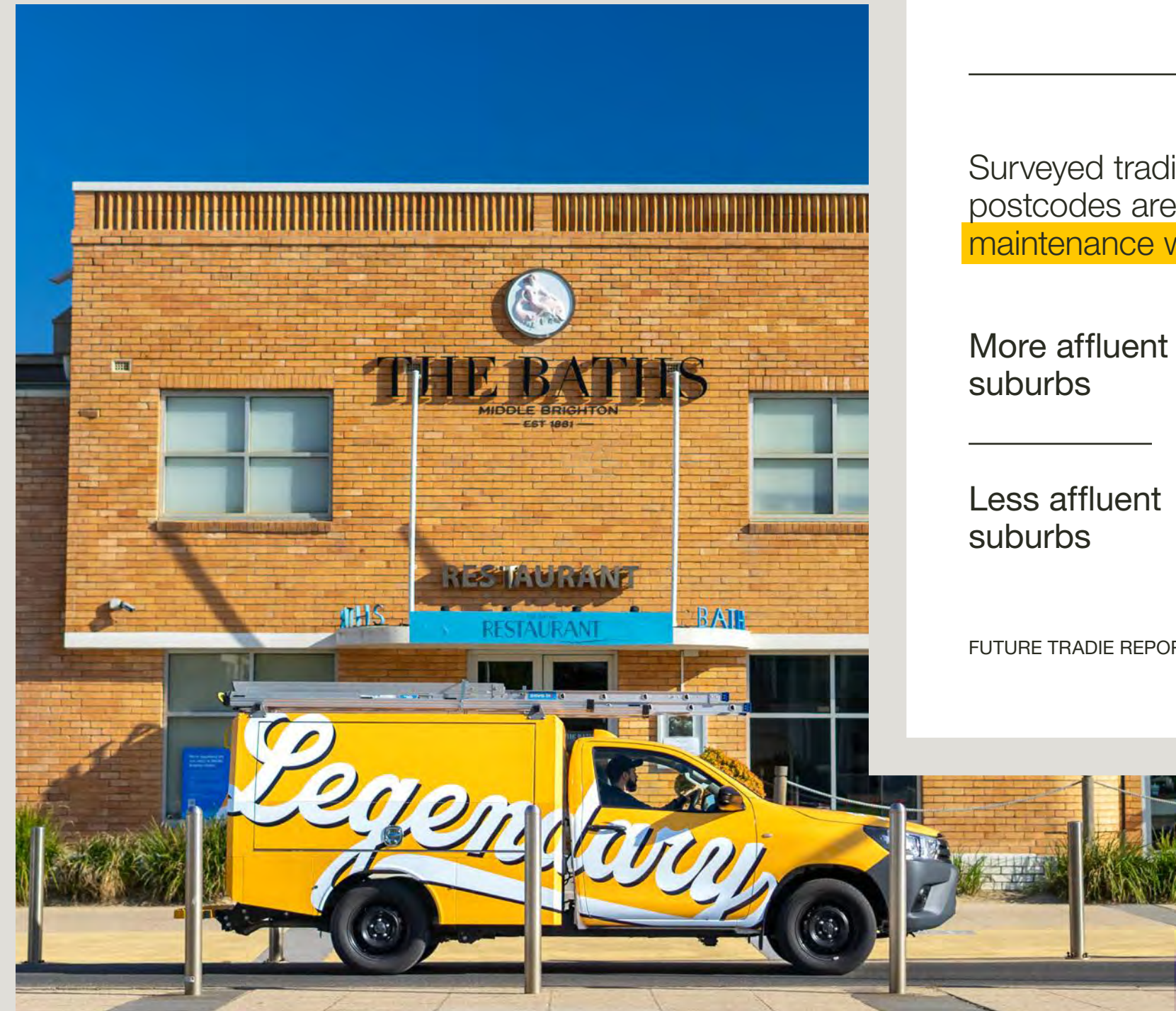
Marketing costs money. Word of mouth marketing in affluent postcodes is the golden ticket to sustainable success and opens a door for continuous profitable work.

A professional finish encourages clients to share positive sentiment on suburb Facebook groups and neighbourhood WhatsApp groups, driving increased leads.

“Our services are priced to reflect the **quality and attention** to detail we provide, which may not align with every budget.

This area has proven to be a good fit for us, as many residents prioritise investing in quality services and have the means to do so.”

Mitch Boerner, Plumbing business owner  
Legendary Plumbers



Surveyed tradies working in affluent postcodes are doing more renovations than those working elsewhere:

# +24%

more tradies who are based in affluent suburbs provide **renovations** as their service offering.

Surveyed tradies working in affluent postcodes are more confident about doing **maintenance work** for their whole career:

More affluent suburbs

# 53%

Less affluent suburbs

# 41%

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

LEGENDARY PLUMBERS

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## Hiring ahead to accommodate training

Traditionally, trades small businesses hire more team members when their existing teams are bursting with the number of jobs on the go—and many still do.

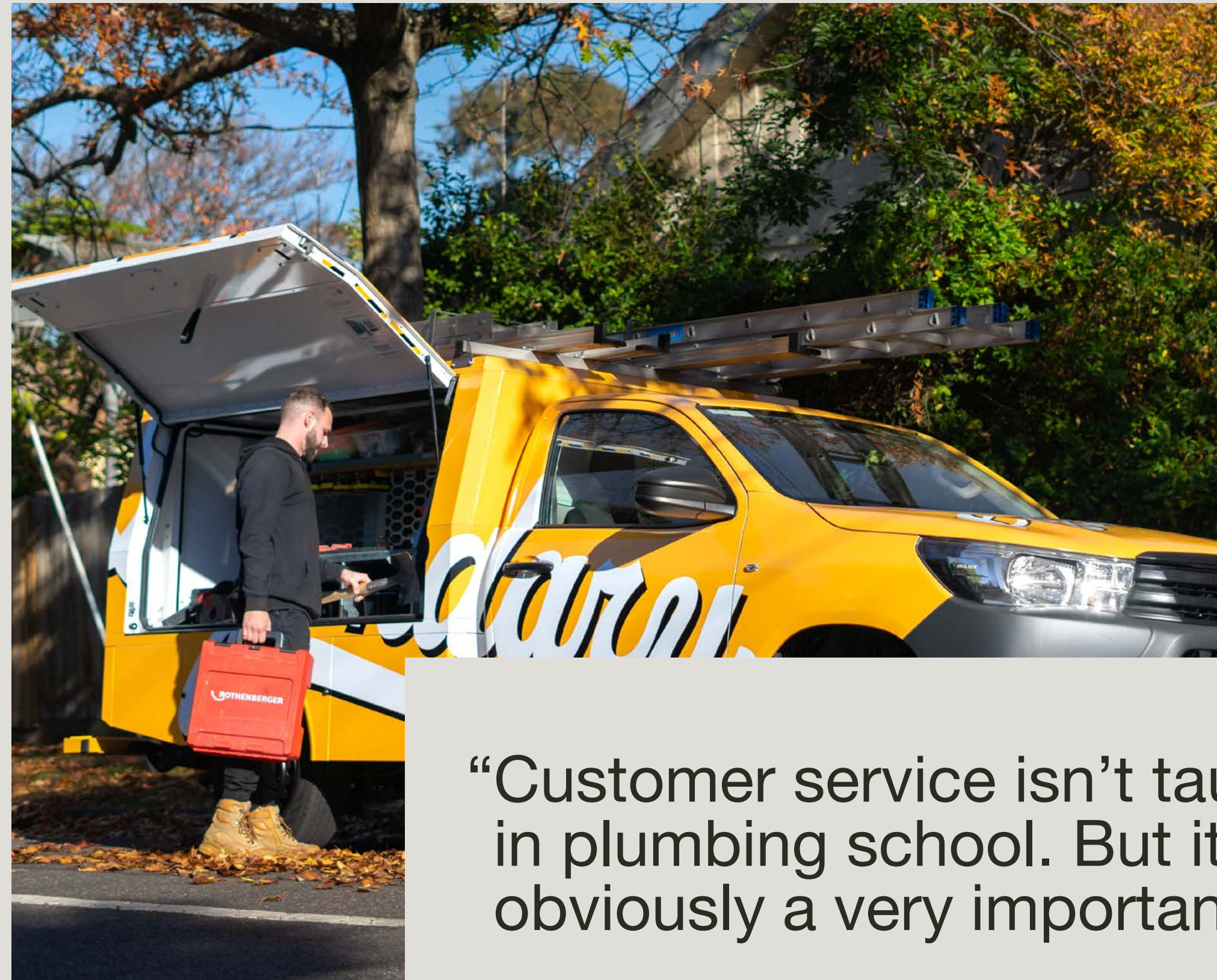
Businesses that win through service are hiring staff before they need them, so they have time to train new starters properly before they represent the brand.

Training covers how the business runs and the level of service expected, so reputation isn't damaged by a newbie doing the wrong thing.

To do this well, emerging small business leaders need to be highly skilled in forecasting workload and margins, as well as managing their brand and training their people, so that all puzzle pieces fit together.

Tracking customer feedback, word-of-mouth leads, and strategically deciding where to expand into, helps them understand impact and forecast growth.

Sustainable expansion with unfaltering service beats rapid growth where mistakes get made.



LEGENDARY PLUMBERS

“Customer service isn't taught in plumbing school. But it's obviously a very important role.

In a nutshell, that's our business: **Customer-focussed** employee, plus being focussed on making sure that everybody here has a great time.”

Mitch Boerner, Plumbing business owner  
Legendary Plumbers

Listen to Mitch talk about  
how to hire ahead



## WHAT WE ARE SEEING



“We might seem very old-fashioned in terms of old-school customer service, but there is **no paperwork here.**

We keep everything on the computer.”

Mitch Boerner, Plumbing business owner  
Legendary Plumbers

Listen to Mitch talk about how technology helps him deliver smooth service



## Time-saving and trust-building tech

Communicating with clients and others on a job takes time and effort—and as a result can be clunky and erratic.

Clients want speedy replies and clear cost breakdowns, detailing exactly what they are getting (and when), to build trust and help with decision-making.

They also expect Uber-style updates on when maintenance trades will arrive or what stage of the process a larger project is at.

**Savvy business owners are using systems and software to:**

- Speed up quoting, booking and following-up on jobs. Think time and date confirmation texts.
- Provide automated dashboards. Think overdue invoices and inbound enquiries.
- Give transparency to everyone involved—business owners included. Think digital photography and BIM downloads.
- Tools often pay for themselves when leaders consider the maximum value for their business health and the day-to-day experience of their team, other trade partners and their clients.

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# Onselling BIM files and virtual walk-throughs

Service models that onsell or weave in the value of specialist outputs to give clients a 360-degree understanding of their home are emerging.

This could be BIM files as a shareable record of behind-the-wall infrastructure, virtual walk-throughs and digital project status reports, or specialist partner documents such as external material costings.

It's not for everyone. But for high-end, high-involvement new builds, this is a great value-add that can be worked into project costings to give the client a digital record of their home that can be shared with any other trades throughout its lifetime.

**43%**

of surveyed tradies want to learn more about **new technologies** that transform the way they build, eg. automation, digital twins and BIM files.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023



ELITE BUILDING SERVICES

“I can **virtually walk** through a finished home, but I want to be able to build a digital twin of what’s happening on the construction site, so people can put VR glasses on and see any stage.”

Bek Bishop, Builder  
Elite Building Services

Listen to Bek talk about virtual reality homes and digital twins



# Spotlight on trailblazers



## LEGENDARY PLUMBERS

### Mitch Boerner

Trade: Plumbing business owner

Age: 30's

Location: Cheltenham, VIC

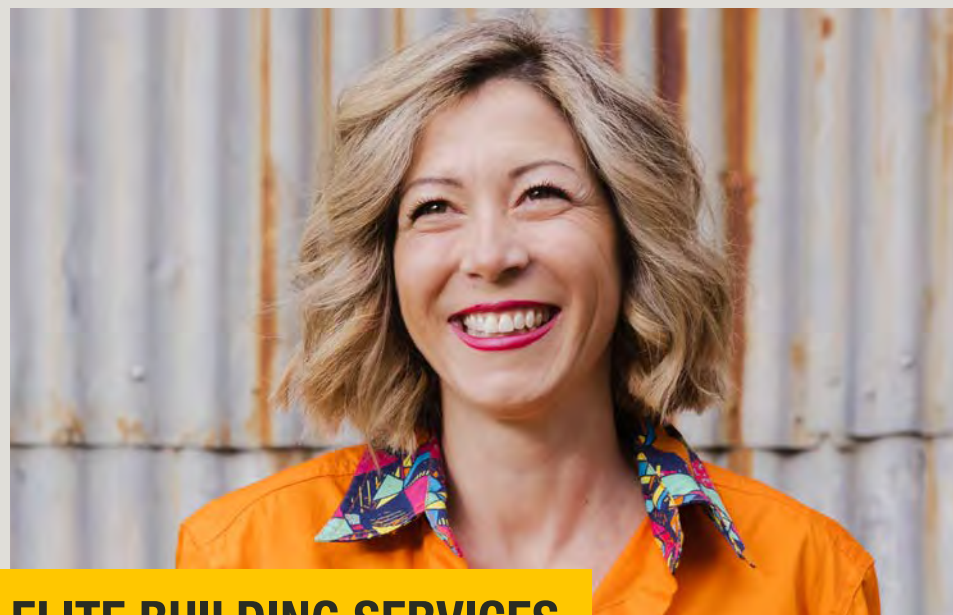
#### Investing in service & brand

With a background in real estate, Mitch built Legendary Plumbers with his brother, a licensed plumber, by putting customer service first.

They're not the cheapest in the area, but they provide a superior service, always delivered neatly and with a smile.

Mitch invested in the vibrant yellow Legendary brand and prioritises timely digitised customer communications, always making them feel cared for.

Staff are trained for two weeks before hitting the road, so nobody has a bad experience and Legendary's reputation is never damaged.



## ELITE BUILDING SERVICES

### Bek Bishop

Trade: Builder

Age: 40's

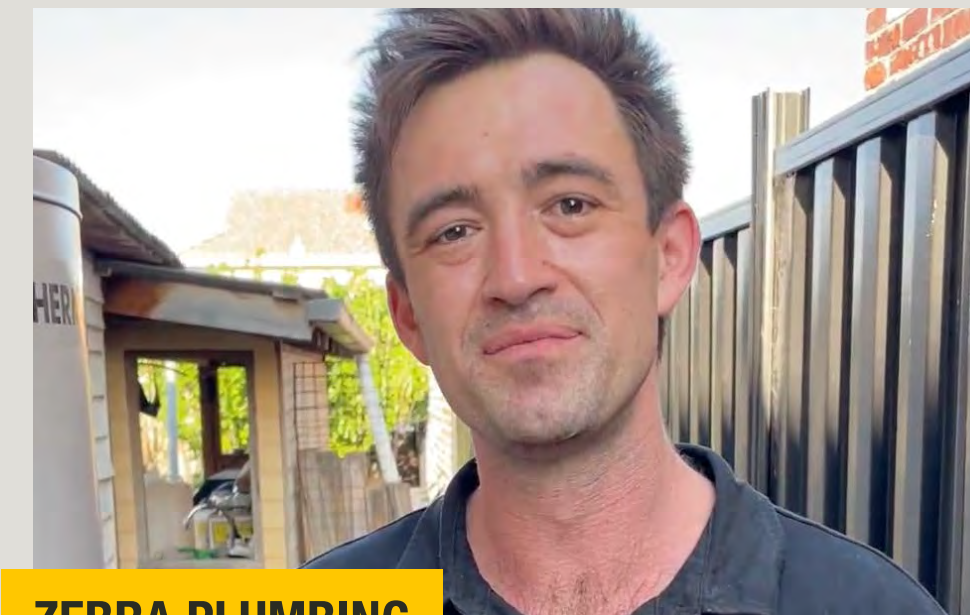
Location: Montrose, VIC

#### Luxury touches that personalise the home-building experience

Bek sees building someone's home as an honour and believes it should be a luxurious, well-considered process that's a joy to experience.

She ensures that Elite's clients receive 1-1 calls, spends time personalising communications and compiles a handover kit that gives them everything they need.

This reinforces the trust and care Elite pours into its building methods, making one of life's most expensive purchases truly worth it from the client's point of view.



## ZEBRA PLUMBING

### Byron Slabbert

Trade: Plumber

Age: 30's

Location: Melbourne, VIC

#### Balancing finding new leads with giving them A+ service

Byron's approach to plumbing is to make it sustainable, profitable and ethical.

He pays for some client leads through Google, but knows that once he delivers good service to a handful, word of mouth about his business will take off.

His model rolls marketing costs into what he charges, and backing it up with service excellence means his clients never question the value they get.

# Opportunities for government and industry bodies

## TO START DOING

Build service tips into seminars and career development points.

This could look like:

- **Service-led business models:** Sharing models and how to apply them to small businesses.
- **Case studies:** Who is doing service well, and what can they share with others?

## TO PLAN FOR

Service inspiration, standards and frameworks that can be used day-to-day.

This could look like:

- **Hearing from service specialists:** Who outside of the trades could help improve the understanding of service, eg. hospitality, luxury goods, automotive, travel.
- **Simple frameworks:** How can leaders encourage their teams to think about service?

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Connect tradies to service specialists in other industries.

This could look like:

- **Inspiration sessions:** Bring outside thinking into the industry, to inspire new ways of working.
- **Networking with service providers:** Host events with service partners who can help trades improve how they do things.

# Opportunities for supplier businesses and brands

## TO START DOING

Support customers to build a strong brand through branding products and services.

This could look like:

- **Service awards:** Reward those who are doing things well.

## TO PLAN FOR

Help tradies to improve service through systems.

This could look like:

- **Communication systems:** Speed up and streamline communications between clients and teams, offer features like photo and video uploads to bring clients closer to their job.
- **Invoicing, quoting and job management:** Make the process smooth, slick and transparent.
- **VR, AR & BIM files:** How can you help customers access and apply new technologies that benefit their customers?

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

A way for tradies to verify their business offers great service.

This could look like:

- **Branded uniforms:** Is there enough demand to offer branded uniforms as part of your range?
- **Branded handover documents:** Can you assist customers with handover documents and product guides that leave room for their logo?
- **Client gifts:** How can you prompt client gifting and help customers reward their clients?

# Opportunities for trades small businesses

## TO START DOING

Define great service standards for your business and make it happen.

This could look like:

- **Develop a signature service move:** Do one thing that makes your business's service stand out against the rest.
- **Engaging your team:** Ask them to come up with the definition of good service, and ways it can be put into action.

## TO PLAN FOR

Encourage referrals and word of mouth business from happy clients.

This could look like:

- **Saying thank you:** Thank or reward customers who share their positive experiences with others.
- **Tracking word of mouth enquiries:** Use online enquiry forms, or ask new customers how they heard about your business, so that you understand what's working.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Look to other businesses delivering great customer service and borrow from them.

This could look like:

- **Going outside your industry:** Look at luxury goods, cars or dining and ask, what part of booking jobs, doing the work, or keeping in touch with customers could you do differently?
- **Keeping on top of competition:** Follow some of your competitors and keep an eye on what they are offering and how they present themselves, so you don't fall behind.

05

# MAGNETIC CULTURE

Creating a positive team culture and helping people grow is the most important aspect of gaining valuable team members.

Sharing their business culture on social media means the pick of the labour market proactively comes to them.



EVOBUILT

# Magnetic culture summary

TROUT | nex+ | SUPERSEED

## WHAT IT IS

Creating a positive team culture and helping people grow is the most important aspect of gaining valuable team members.

Sharing their business culture on social media means the pick of the labour market proactively comes to them.

## WHAT'S DRIVING IT

- Labour shortages combined with increasing demand mean business owners need to work hard to keep their teams
- With retirement spiking over the next 10 years, the shortage is set to get worse
- Apprentices are dropping out because of a culture clash with older generations and poor treatment
- Younger tradie business leaders have different attitudes to "I had it tough, so that's just the way it is", and want to actively make the experience better for those entering the industry
- Diversity is still a challenge: Many tradies see women and CALD (culturally & linguistically diverse) workers as a solution, but don't know how to manage or connect with these individuals

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Committed teams who deliver more value and contribute to long-term business goals
- Reduced effort needed to maintain team mental health
- Reduced effort to find new employees, increased team member tenure
- Not as much need to increase wages as team incentive
- Better customer service
- Overall improvement in industry culture



## THE FUTURE TRADIE

Has a clear view of what good vs. bad company culture looks like.

Leads by example, avoids double standards and expects their whole team to lift their game too.

Inspires younger generations to join the trade, because it looks fun, rewarding and is an industry where they will be valued.

Supports diversity and inclusion (but needs help navigating challenges in this area).

Allows others to take on personal responsibility, so they can progress and learn essential skills for running a business.

Attracts talent through TikTok.

Sets up regular company rituals, to bring people together.

Celebrates talent milestones with meaningful gifts.

Allows flex working hours, provided individuals take responsibility for managing jobs & connecting with clients to ensure the work doesn't suffer.

Encourages their team to learn from their mistakes, speak up when they are having a hard time and be vulnerable.

Understands each team member's idea of success, has regular 1-1 check-ins and performance planning sessions.

Prioritises mental health as much as physical safety, and respects work-life balance and external priorities.

IMAGE: ED ROSS & DAN ALLEN, TRADEMUTT | TIACS

# What is magnetic culture?

The tradie lifestyle—independence, work-life balance, practical problem solving and feeling happy to come to work every day—is a huge drawcard, attracting around 200,000 apprentices every year.

But tradies are leaving gigs due to poor workplace culture. This combined with a nation-wide labour shortage, means the pressure is on small business owners to find and keep talent.

Many emerging leaders still remember how tough it was to break into the industry and as a result, are

building human-centric businesses. People come before the work and support, education and 1-1 care boosts general team happiness.

There is a departure from the classic top-down business structure too, with leaders choosing to reward those with the right attitude with more responsibilities.

Positive culture is the ultimate draw card, triggering everything from flexible work schedules to sharing company culture on TikTok to pull in new recruits.

## 25%

of surveyed tradies under 45YO believe having a **strong team culture** is what makes their company competitive — compared with only 7% over 45YO.

## FINDING SKILLED LABOUR

is the #2 challenge, behind rising costs, that tradies will face today and five years into the future.

## 45%

of surveyed tradies who are concerned about finding skilled labour, see **happiness and mental health** of employees as the key driver of great culture.



EVOBUILT

FORCES DRIVING IT

ROLE OF WORK POPULATION

# The labour shortage

There is a serious tradie shortage in Australia. Even though building is slowing (new housing starts have dropped 21% since September 2022), Master Builders is estimating that the immediate shortfall of tradies is around 70,000 to 80,000 people.

Growth is needed to meet government mandates and population housing needs. Tradespeople migrating to Australia will solve part of the problem, but at the same time we will lose the most experienced business owners—baby boomers—through retirement.

**Tradies believe that, even in five years time, they will still struggle with labour shortages.**

Finding time to train apprentices, recruit and onboard new teammates, and manage day-to-day business also costs the industry thousands of dollars.

Emerging leaders value their company’s culture as a tactic to protect their small businesses from weathering the cost of losing talent in an already competitive market.

ARTICLE: NEW HOME BUILDS TO FALL AS CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FACES A SKILLS SHORTAGE OF UP TO 80,000 TRADESPEOPLE, 7 NEWS, JANUARY 2023

## HIA Trades Availability Index, September 2023

- An index reading between -0.01 and -1.00 reflects a moderate undersupply of skilled tradespeople
- Between -1.01 and -2.00 represents a substantial undersupply
- ACT, NT & TAS not supplied

HOME BUILDERS AIMING TO USE SLOWER YEAR TO TRAIN MORE APPRENTICES, FEBRUARY 2024



EVOBUILT

# 66,400

new tradespeople expected to join the construction industry in five years, between November 2021 and November 2026.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT LABOUR MARKET INSIGHTS, JUNE 2022.



“

We're in an arms race for labour.

Matt Zubrinich, Plumber  
Plumbify



FORCES DRIVING IT

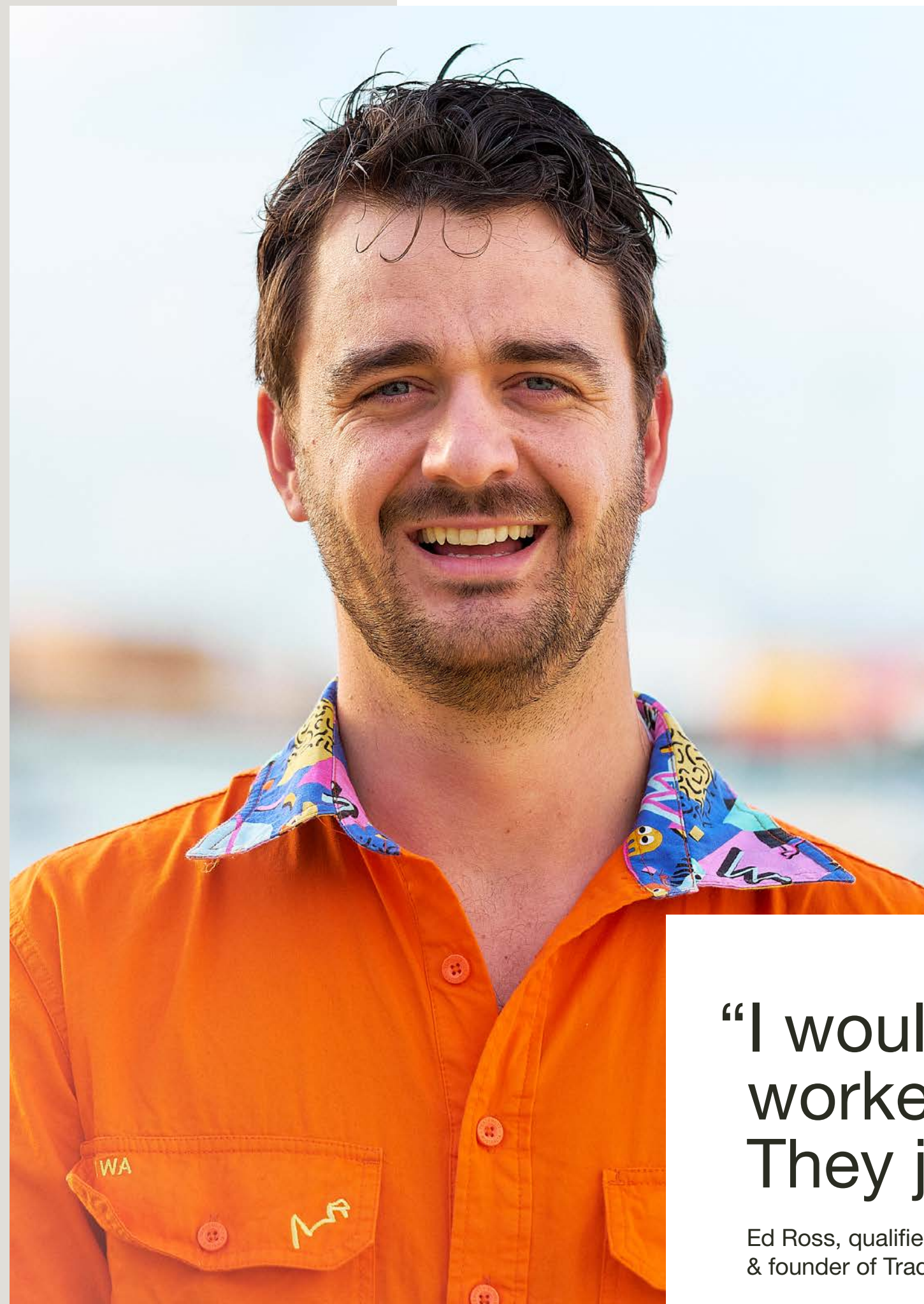
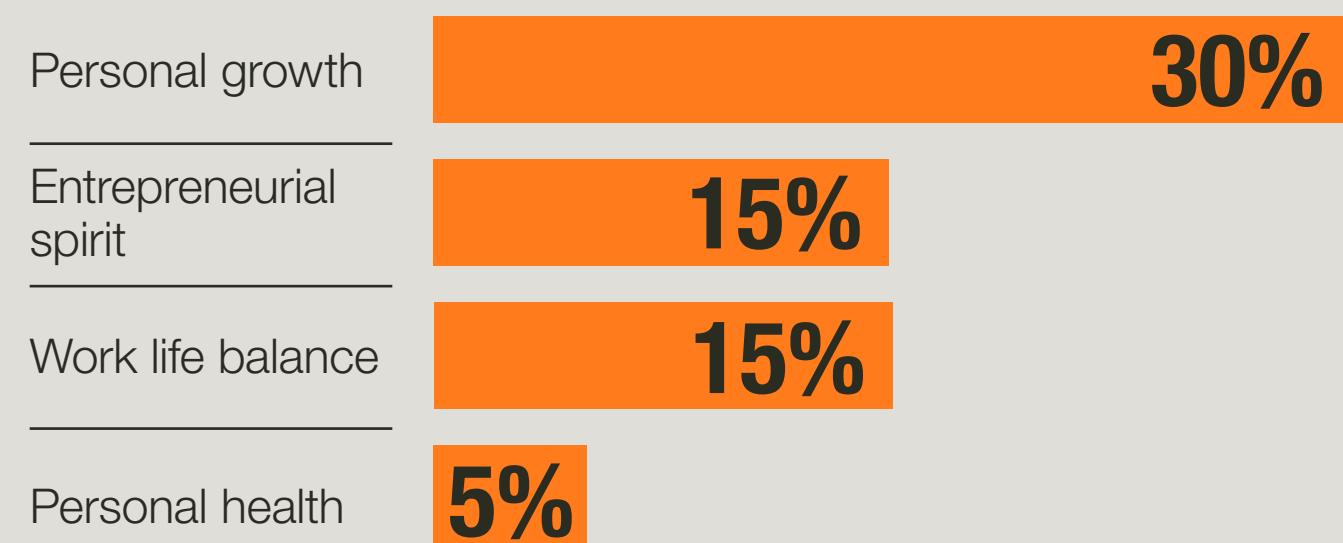
# Apprentice culture clash

Gen Z apprentices have different expectations of workplace culture, when compared to Boomer and Gen X bosses. They expect to be treated like competent adults who deserve respect – which isn't always the reality on the job.

Older tradespeople who had it tough when they were young think others should go through the same treatment, but for today's apprentices, this is a no-go.

The impact of this culture clash is stark. More young people quit construction apprenticeships in Q1 of FY2022-23 than qualified.

18-24YO tradies want to be coached to develop:



**+15%** increase YOY in apprenticeship dropouts (Q1 FY22 vs. Q1 FY23)

**13%** quit before qualifying. They leave because they **didn't get on with their boss**

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH- NATIONAL APPRENTICE AND TRAINEE COLLECTION.

“I wouldn't say the people I worked with were bad bosses. They just **weren't good bosses.**”

Ed Ross, qualified builder & founder of TradeMutt

Listen to Ed talk about when apprenticeships go wrong

## FORCES DRIVING IT

## Breaking the cycle

The new generation of leaders remember their apprenticeships. Their first-hand experience of unwelcoming and disrespectful environments is a key driver—but their attitude to coaching talent is the opposite to generations who managed them.

It's not, "I had it tough, so that's just the way it is."  
It's "I had it tough, and I want to make it a better, more fulfilling experience than my own."

They take pride in being respectful, supportive and leading by example, encouraging their people to try new things, speak up when they are struggling, take responsibility for new initiatives and learn from mistakes.

**“Building a culture starts with you, you must set yourself goals to achieve every day.**

**Plumbing is the easy part.”**

Plumber, male, 25-34YO,  
Narangba, QLD



TY SIENNA, BRICKS BY TY

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## Celebrating personal success and growth

By understanding what their team members need in order to achieve their best—personally and professionally—leaders are winning talent for the long-term and getting more value out of them.

Using personal and professional development plans to get clear on goals and pathways is an asset.

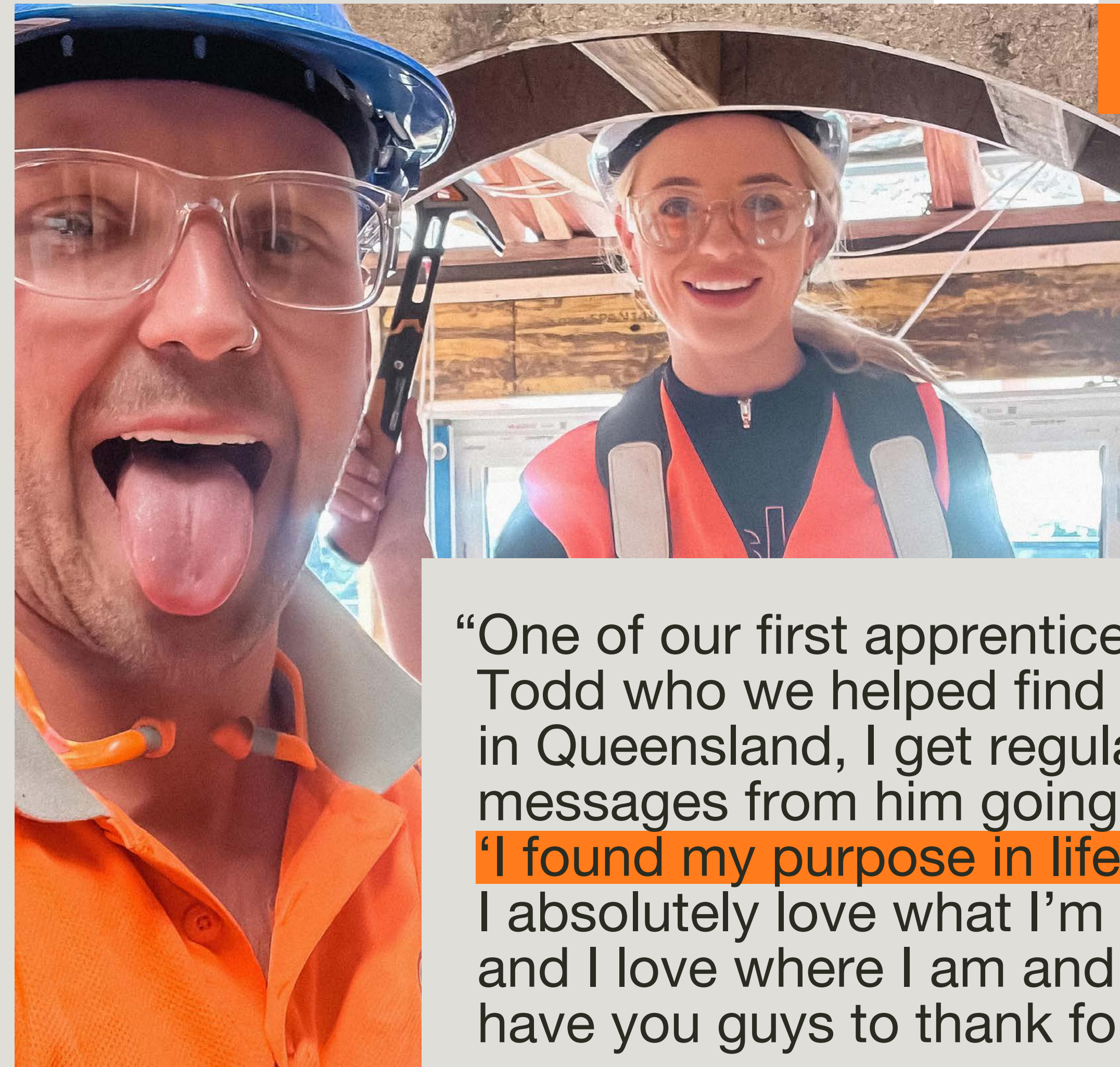
Even simply taking regular time out to chat through team members' goals, within 14 days of them joining, then reviewing these quarterly, shows care, investment and improves retention and satisfaction.

Emerging leaders are motivated by seeing their teams succeed and achieve the lifestyles they want.

It's this infectious success, instead of money, that motivates them to stay in the trades—even if they have other career options.



Listen to Joe talk about nailing 14-day & quarterly check-ins




“One of our first apprentices, Todd who we helped find a job in Queensland, I get regular messages from him going, **‘I found my purpose in life, I absolutely love what I’m doing and I love where I am and I have you guys to thank for it’**”

Robby Kruyer, Builder  
Evobuilt

27%

of surveyed tradies who see great culture as their competitive edge, view **treating mistakes as learning opportunities** as the main driver of positive team culture.

Listen to Matt talk about helping others succeed 



PLUMBIFY

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## Sharing company culture on social media

Being known for running a business where people love coming to work is a source of pride. The best place for a peek under the hood of a company's culture to attract young tradies is TikTok.

Being transparent about the ups and downs of running a business, and sharing the funny, surprising and tough stuff, means new tradies have an accurate idea of what the job and its culture are like.

Team members get a morale boost by contributing positive, personality-filled stories to the company's social media accounts.

This isn't about getting job leads. Being mini-celebrities in professional communities attracts next-gen talent in an authentic, low-effort way. Think: DM's not CV's.



PLUMBIFY

### Flexibility & leadership opportunities

Emerging leaders are open to their committed team members having flexibility so they can achieve their other priorities—whether those are fitness, family, lifestyle or a side hustle.

For someone with the right attitude, leadership opportunities can come early, too.

The next generation of bosses believes that if someone has the right values and aptitude, then they can be trusted to work through challenges and step up, regardless of age.

“Luke was my first employee and now he is my operations manager. He’s only 24 but **he’s built pretty different.**”

Matthew Zubrinich, Plumber  
Plumbify

Listen to Matt talk about giving opportunities to young employees





TRADEMUTT

“

You can retain and bring on really good talent for less money with a better culture and better work-life balance for employees, for sure.

Ed Ross  
Carpenter & founder  
TradeMutt

## WHAT WE ARE SEEING

## New rituals

Team tasks like cleaning vehicles together, learning about new tools and materials, or brainstorming how to improve an area of the business builds connection, improves the quality of service and makes everyone feel included.

To celebrate special occasions and milestones, meaningful gifts show team members they are valued and reap returns of long-term loyalty.



EVOBUILT



“We started doing things like paintballing. We would go rock climbing and get a bus to the Mornington Peninsula to go to a brewery.

We do this every three months, just to get to know everyone and **have fun with the team.**

Once you’ve been with the team for a year, we like to get you a gift, which is a really cool Black Martinez hammer.”

Robby Kruyer, Builder  
Evobuilt



WHAT WE ARE SEEING

# Appetite for diversity support

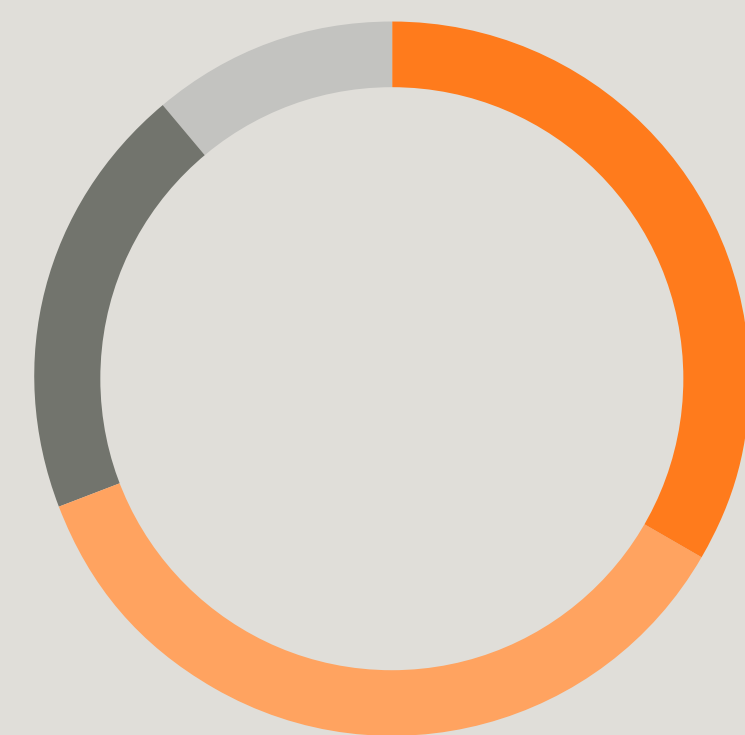
Only one in three tradespeople are confident about managing and working with diverse teams—but many respondents cited women and immigrants (who are likely to be culturally and linguistically diverse) as a key source of talent.

Future tradie leaders know that their team culture needs to accommodate and welcome these tradies, but need practical help doing that.

A practical kit for inclusive sites and team culture would go a long way, as well as information about specific organisations for women.

## How do you feel about enabling more diverse people to get into and stay in the trades?

(% of total respondents)



- Confident **33%**
- Curious **36%**
- Don't care **20%**
- Unsure **11%**

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023



MJ BRICKLAYING

**33%**

of surveyed tradies are confident managing and working with **diverse teams**.

**41%**

of surveyed tradies under 45YO are confident in this area, showing a shift in ability.

**36%**

of surveyed tradies want to know more and need support in this area.

FUTURE TRADIE REPORT 2024 SURVEY, OCT-NOV 2023

“I’ve had people call me, talking about the job, and they’re like, **“Oh, you’re the boss?”** and I’m like, “Yes.” And then they’ll hang up the phone on me.”

Monique Juratovac, Bricklayer  
MJ Bricklaying

Listen to Monique talk about the challenges of being a female boss



# Opportunities for government and industry bodies

## TO START DOING

Set the benchmark for good culture and provide tools to cultivate it.

This could look like:

- **Cultural principles:** Setting principles and standards that define culture.
- **Monitoring tools:** Sharing tools with industry benchmarks, so leaders can measure and compare.
- **Support systems:** How can small businesses get advice to help with culture improvement?

## TO PLAN FOR

Formal leadership training for tradie business owners.

This could look like:

- **Focussed training:** Exploring people leadership and how culture is influenced within a small business setting.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Building culture standards and inclusivity into OH&S standards.

This could look like:

- **Assessments of respect, inclusion and psychological safety:** So that these factors inform OH&S standards.

# Opportunities for supplier businesses and brands

## TO START DOING

Connect like-minded tradies to help with on-the-job culture.

This could look like:

- **Culture-based networking:** Helping tradies connect with others to chat about what great culture looks like, and how to work through challenges.

## TO PLAN FOR

Connecting tradies with specialist partners and organisations.

This could look like:

- **Ongoing partnerships:** Pairing with organisations that support mental health, wellbeing and leadership skills, to fill a gap and show your brand supports the trades holistically.
- **Specialist partners for specific challenges:** Such as Empowered Women in Trades, for a focus on gender equity in workplace culture.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Offer grants or rewards for stand-out company culture.

This could look like:

- **Celebrating people-based improvements:** Such as embedding flexible work, supporting team members to step up, or rewarding those who are giving back to the industry's culture.

# Opportunities for trades small businesses

## TO START DOING

Measure company culture and encourage everyone to contribute.

This could look like:

- **Culture tracking:** Make tracking culture through feedback as straightforward as measuring the number of jobs your team completes.
- **Sharing wins and challenges:** Invite everyone to share their wins and challenges more regularly, so you can learn from and support each other.

## TO PLAN FOR

Conduct regular one-on-one chats and performance reviews.

This could look like:

- **Setting aside the time:** Pre-plan check in's, so that they definitely happen.
- **Using discussion guides:** This lets everyone prepare and get the most out of check in's.

## CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

Learn how to correct team members who don't support cultural standards.

This could look like:

- **Constructive feedback:** Be comfortable with giving and accepting team-mates' constructive feedback, and turning it into action.
- **Prepare solutions:** Whether it's better language to use on the job, or practical ways to help individuals connect with each other, be prepared so you can suggest new approaches.

# Spotlight on trailblazers



**PLUMBIFY**

## Matthew Zubrinich

Trade: Plumber

Age: mid 30's

Location: Wingfield, SA

### Balancing finding new leads with giving them A+ service

Matt uses company culture to make his business the top pick for current and future plumbers.

He set up his business, took leadership training courses, built a solid team and then got on social media.

His brand balances business insight and tradie comedy, thanks to serious clips from his Plumbify podcast and skits his team make.

Top apprentices reach out to him for work via TikTok, instead of calling or emailing. He's also getting recognized by school kids, who want to grow up to be plumbers because working for Plumbify looks fun.



**TRADEMUTT, TIACS**

## Ed Ross

Trade: Carpenter

Age: early 30's

Location: Brisbane, QLD

### Making mental health support stand out

Ed's enthusiasm for tradie mental health was so great that he ditched the day job to run TradeMutt workwear, which supports the TIACS hotline tradies can call for help.

Everything Ed and his business partner Dan do is designed to change the day-to-day culture on the job, from being one where people keep problems to themselves, to sharing, finding support and making new mates. This helps lift the daily load.



**LEGENDARY PLUMBERS**

## Mitch Boerner

Trade: Plumbing business owner

Age: early 30's

Location: Cheltenham, VIC

### Rituals that build culture & connection

Mitch knows that it can be hard to find the time to connect to teammates during a busy work week. So he's made space in the Legendary calendar for brekkie, van-cleaning and catch-ups every Friday.

His crew love spending the time socialising while also tidying and polishing the company's yellow utes.

They take pride in both having a positive, supportive culture and keeping up appearances. A win-win for all.

01

**LIMITLESS LEARNING**

Learning a trade is vastly different to learning how to run a successful business.

Business coaches, specialist partners, AI, social networks, and adjacent industries all play a part in helping tradies get ahead.

**WHAT'S DRIVING IT**

- Knowledge gap between trade and business skills
- Tradespeople looking to parallel industries and markets for business inspo
- Shift from “tall poppy syndrome” towards pride in success and openly sharing
- Access to AI, SAAS, specialist partners and social networks
- Crowd sourcing knowledge to explore new solutions and opportunities
- Rise in business coaching. 100% of respondents who define success by having a strong business model, use business coaches

**BEHAVIOURS & HABITS**

- Working with specialists and business coaches
- Connecting with like-minded tradies, locally and globally
- Pride in success and willingness to sharing how they got there
- Accessing industry webinars, podcasts, and virtual demonstrations
- Automating business processes and client experience
- Considers sharing their knowledge at a cost as an additional revenue stream

02

**VALUES REBOOT**

The future tradie needs to excel in resilience, integrity, adaptability, professionalism, dedication, and empathy.

Trust, focus, and respect help them to navigate change and connect with those from different generations and backgrounds.

**WHAT'S DRIVING IT**

- Higher expectations of professionalism from clients
- People entering trade workforce who would have previously entered white-collar jobs
- Rebuilding trust between clients, tradespeople, and other partners
- Knowledge of technologies, smart home systems and sustainable solutions
- Success defined differently, depending on career stage and personal priorities

**BEHAVIOURS & HABITS**

- Integrity; maintaining trust between clients and team
- Up to date with training, legislation, and codes
- Professionalism; pride in appearance and quality of work
- Viewing failures as learning opportunities
- Forming industry relationships
- Commitment to quality, even if it takes more time
- Respect and empathy for those from different backgrounds

03

**SUSTAINABLE BUILDING**

Tradespeople know they need to build sustainably and want pocket-friendly, practical solutions.

Adapting existing properties, reducing energy consumption and waste and advising homeowners about making good choices are part of the job. Builders especially think in 30+ year timeframes, not 10-year warranties.

**WHAT'S DRIVING IT**

- Attitudes to sustainability are changing; trades want to be sustainable but need to balance budget and deadlines
- Tradies are beginning to understand that their industry has a lot to lose; warmer days mean fewer working hours and increased OH&S risks
- Perceptions of value and longevity are changing from disposable buildings that only last for five, seven or 10- year product or building warranties, to 30+ year lifespans
- Adoption of solar, electric and smart homes is increasing thanks to changes in codes for new buildings, affordability of tech and rebates

**BEHAVIOURS & HABITS**

- Building sustainable practices into business models
- Learning state-specific rebates, to help clients navigate
- Advising homeowners on solutions based on energy and water usage
- Doing quality work that will last 30+ years
- Looking overseas for products and techniques that meet higher standards
- Looking to brands & suppliers to help educate

04

**TRADIE HOSPITALITY**

Next-gen maintenance trades are polished professional service providers. They develop lifelong relationships with clients who value care and hospitality.

Reputation is everything, making every client interaction count.

**WHAT'S DRIVING IT**

- Trades who deliver A+ hospitality able to charge more with fewer pricing challenges from clients and focusing on white-glove service in wealthy areas
- Homeowners who are staying put due to economic pressures meaning more maintenance-type jobs
- Bespoke building considered as a luxury experience
- Providing excellent service seen as a skill separate to trade skills, which requires distinct coaching and mindset
- Access to tech that extends customer experience

**BEHAVIOURS & HABITS**

- Training teams in client service, to maintain reputation
- Monitoring feedback and client satisfaction
- Using technology to improve client experience and team communications
- Pacing the expansion of their business to drive quality-first
- Adding memorable touchpoints to their client's journey
- Ensuring team is always presentable

05

**MAGNETIC CULTURE**

Creating a positive team culture and helping people grow is the most important aspect of attracting valuable team members.

Sharing their business culture on social media means the pick of the labour market proactively comes to them.

**WHAT'S DRIVING IT**

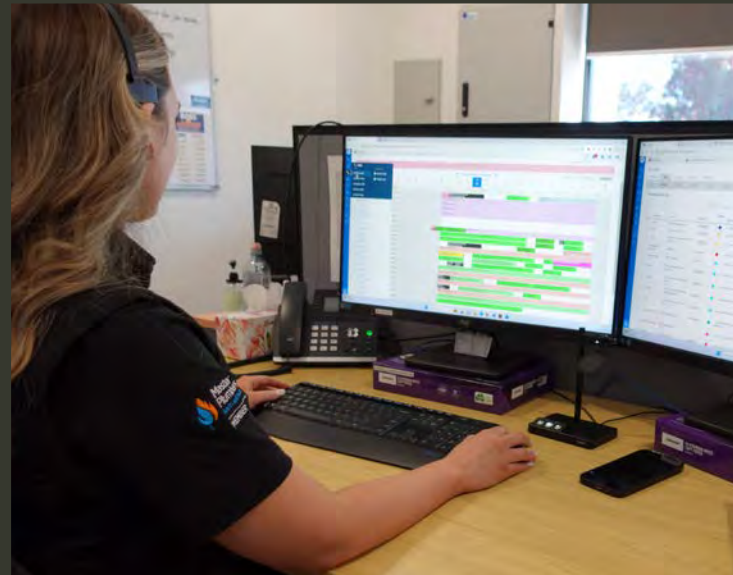
- Labour shortages and increased demand means business owners must work hard to keep their teams
- Apprentices dropping out due to culture clash with older generations
- 75% of the trade workforce will be Millennials & Gen Z by 2033
- Younger tradie business leaders actively making the experience of entering the industry better
- Many tradies see women and CALD workers as a solution, but don't know how to manage or connect with them

**BEHAVIOURS & HABITS**

- Defining what good vs. bad company culture looks like
- Leading by example
- Supporting diversity and inclusion
- Attracting talent through TikTok and social media channels
- Team rituals to bring people together
- Celebrating talent milestones with meaningful gifts
- Supporting team to learn from mistakes
- Understanding each team member's idea of success

# MINDSETS

Four mindsets summarising how emerging leaders think, work and approach challenges in their business.





# BUSINESS OPTIMISER



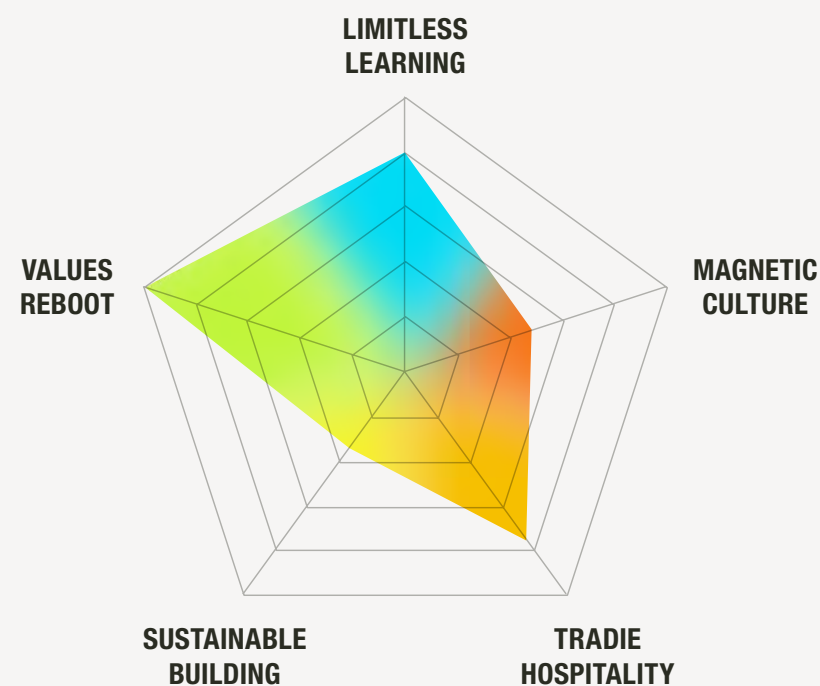
I have a natural entrepreneurial mindset in my way of thinking and my approach to business. I'm always evolving my understanding of being an excellent leader and I follow my business's numbers to get clear on how I'm tracking.

I have a passion for business success and chose a career in the trades because I saw it as a path to running my own business one day.

Much of my time is spent working on the business, supporting my team and building best practice processes as opposed to being just on the tools.

I'm always looking for what's next and how I can optimise operations to strengthen the business.

## Themes they care about



## VALUES

- **Progress:** Always moving forward, evolving, and not remaining stagnant.
- **Leadership:** Has a strong, well-defined vision for the business and how to get there.
- **Legacy:** Creating a strong business for their team and the future.
- **Innovation:** Looks for ways to run their business in a different way to what they've experienced before.
- **Focus:** Knows that progress happens when they focus on solving one business problem at once, instead of too many priorities.

## WINS BY

- Following the numbers of their business, ensuring that they have visibility, metrics and measurements.
- Seeking and absorbing content on business management, leadership and trade industry (local and global).
- Building systems and processes in their business so that everything operates efficiently.
- Strategically selecting where to expand or what tools and services to invest in.

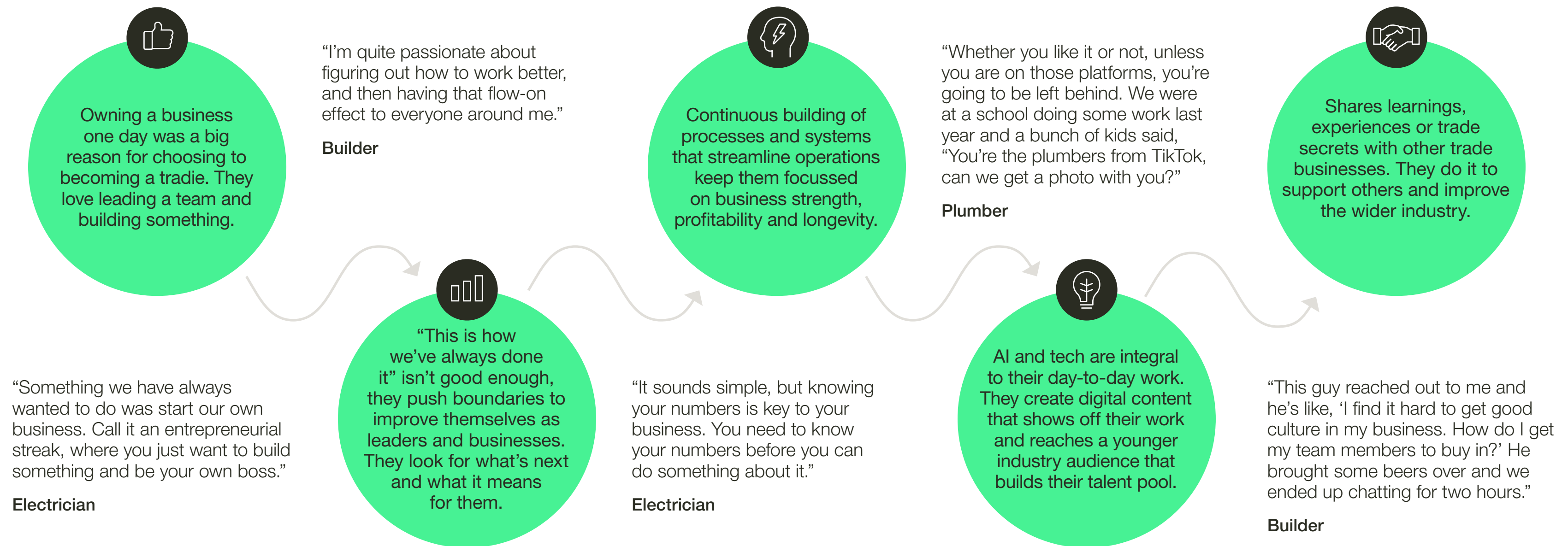
## TOOLS & SUPPORT

- Tech like AI and Chat GPT, to support day-to-day tasks like job ads and finding standards.
- Job management systems and tools to make running the business streamlined.
- Client facing communication tools to provide updates and notifications about the job.
- Business management and leadership content eg. books, podcasts, seminars about business improvement.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Eager to learn from other professionals who provide a new perspective.
- Opportunity to engage them with new tools, services and systems that support business monitoring, transparency and efficiency.
- Eager to build their businesses up to a point, then exit the business. However, they are unsure of the best way to exit and what to do next.

## MINDSET JOURNEY





# NICHE SPECIALIST

I am building expertise in a specific area that I am passionate about, and that I know there will be future demand for.

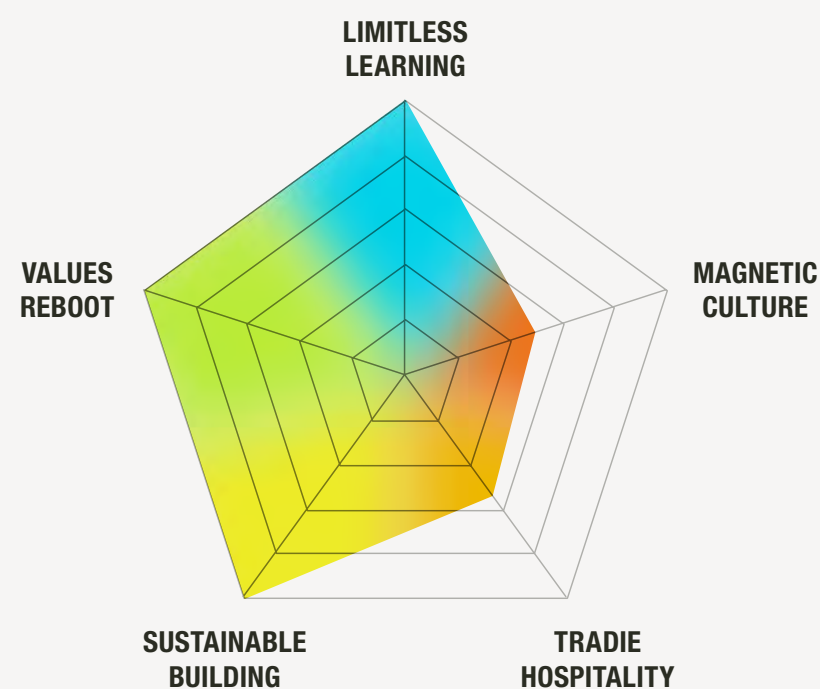
I have one eye on the future, so I know the number of clients demanding my skillset will grow.

I love learning and I'm committed to being an expert in an area such as sustainability, electric battery charging and decentralised power, or passive and climate resilient houses.

I look to other countries' standards and what trades are doing overseas to inform my knowledge and practice. I happily connect with experts on digital platforms, to ask questions or help solve problems.

I think long term, look for hardwearing solutions and believe building for 30+ year lifetimes is better than having to rebuild and refurbish homes within their 10-year warranties.

## Themes they care about



## VALUES

- **Sustainability:** Commitment to learning new ways to build better for the future.
- **Adaptability:** Recognising the demand for new technology and products, improving knowledge to meet this.
- **Long term thinking:** Opting for quality products that last, using techniques that stand the test of time.
- **Expertise:** Building expertise in specific areas and skillsets.
- **Selling quality:** The ability to sell and endorse quality, over quick fixes.

## WINS BY

- Connecting with other tradies who are already in their niche space.
- Building knowledge to be seen as an expert and a voice that others listen to, to upskill and get support.
- Looking to the US and Europe for standards and processes around new technologies, product innovation and sustainable building.
- Finding new ways to manage waste on site, using circular systems.
- Targetting a focussed customer base that wants to invest in quality and sustainable products.

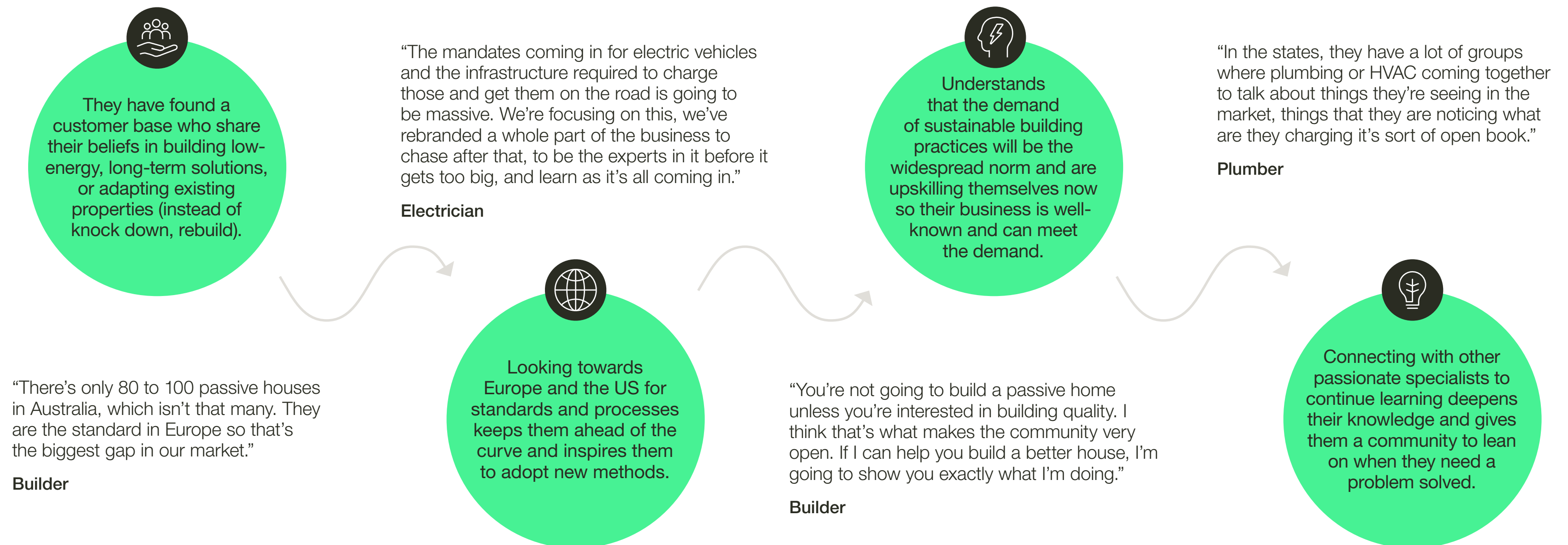
## TOOLS & SUPPORT

- Social media connects them to others in their niche, often in different states & countries, to learn.
- Partnering with suppliers to understand the latest products and techniques in sustainability, technology or salvage/repair.
- Guidance in specialist areas such as passive housing, thermally stable properties, energy storage, materials reuse, incorporating existing structures.
- Assistance understanding new professional accreditations and practical application of the latest codes and standards.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Keeping up to date with government housing commitments.
- Knowing the best way to build something when the project is already underway.
- Conveying the cost, quality and benefits of products to clients.
- Gaining respected accreditations in new skills.
- Opportunity to use accreditation as a path to market for emerging products, if supported with education and accreditation.

## MINDSET JOURNEY



# SERVICE STEWARD

My recognisable brand and super-charged service offering gives me a competitive edge in the maintenance and renovation market.

I embed systems and processes that make using my business seamless. Team members are trained to deliver excellent in-home service and build deep life-long relationships with customers, who trust them with the care of their homes.

My vehicles stand out on the road, my marketing channels are polished, and my team always arrive in uniform.

Polite conversations, timely responses and transparent communications (text messages, digital booking systems) are just as important as the quality of the work.

I see it as a privilege to be involved in building and maintaining my clients' homes and deliver a service that sets me apart from others.

## Themes they care about



## VALUES

- **Transparency:** Communication to customers, particularly about the work, products and pricing.
- **Experience:** A high quality client experience (reliability, politeness, presentation), as well as great work.
- **Professionalism:** Approached more like a professional service.
- **Integrity:** Being honest and building trust with those who work with them.
- **Personalisation:** Take clients on a journey where they feel understood, supported and delighted.

## WINS BY

- Creating a strong brand presence, each client touch point is polished.
- Systemising processes so they can scale, going the extra mile for their clients and provide service excellence every time.
- Training team members so that service standards are uniform and don't falter.
- Targetting affluent suburbs where homeowners appreciate and will pay for high quality service.
- Building trust with clients from initial meetings and following through during the experience of working together.
- Adding new services, such as virtual walk-throughs or BIM file packages.

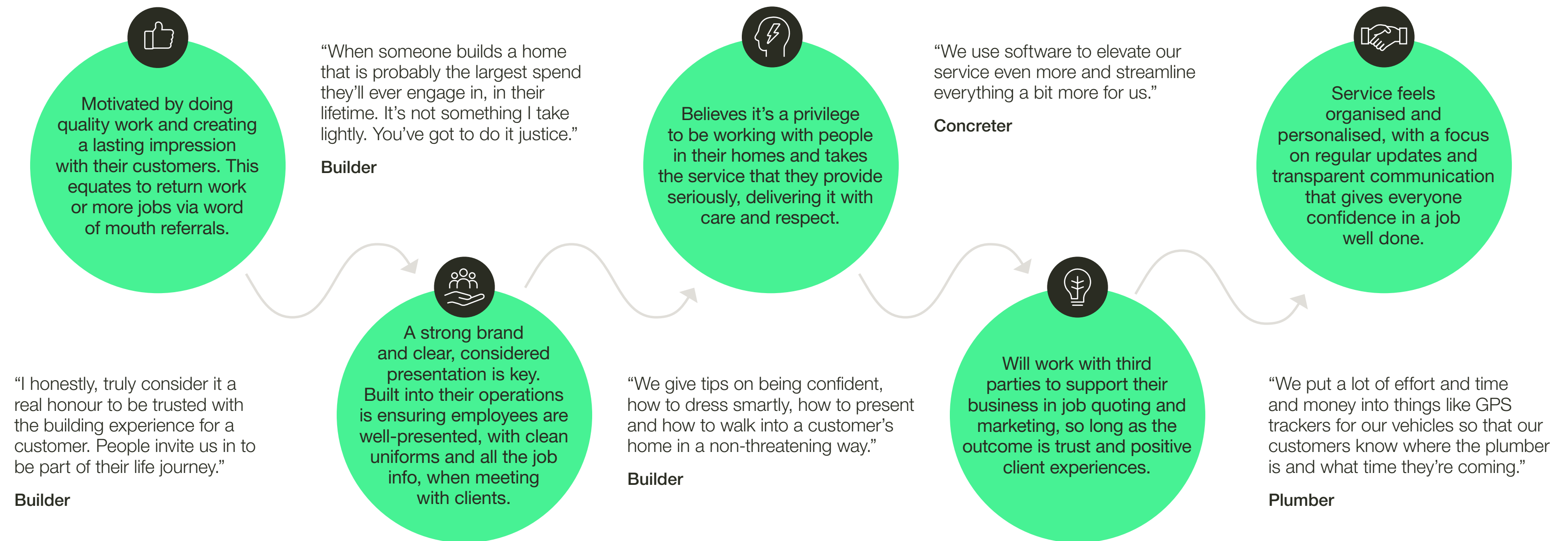
## TOOLS & SUPPORT

- Help communicating the range of products and methods in their trade, so clients feel informed and select the right one for them.
- Automated customer communications and booking systems, to make the process smooth and provide timely updates.
- Photography, videography & VR to help customers view their work & feel involved every step of the way.
- Uses external partners to help them with quoting, or to provide personalised service touch points, to build trust with customers.
- Branding and marketing services, to create a unique brand and up-to-date channels, representing their services.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Challenge to maintain standards as they scale—opportunity to help them automate some client experience touchpoints, and automate staff training.
- Opportunity to provide brand, marketing, and digital tools that extend customer service.
- Challenge is getting customer feedback on service — what's working vs. what's not.
- Help selling products to clients in a simple, easy-to-navigate way.

## MINDSET JOURNEY





# CULTURE LEADER

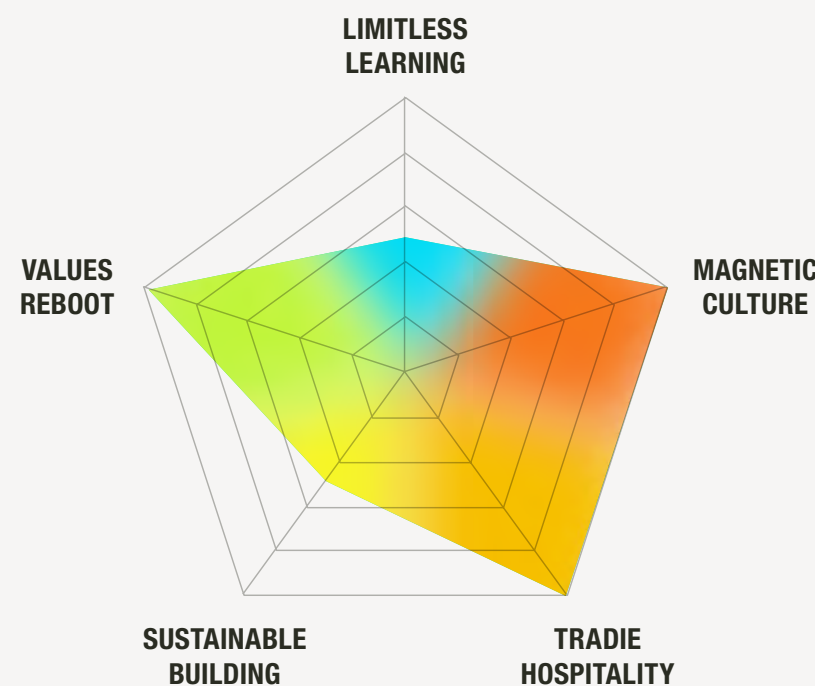


My approach to my business is human centred. I'm an expert in soft skills, like 1-1 chats, motivating teams when times get tough, or helping people work through a tough patch. I feel rewarded when I'm focusing on the mental, physical and professional wellbeing of those that work with me or form part of a broader industry community.

I have experienced poor workplaces, so know what not to do. I knew that when I started my own business that I didn't want to make the same mistakes.

I am invested in lifting the trades out of the cultural challenges that I've experienced, getting rid of poor stereotypes by setting good examples. I believe that caring for my team as humans (not just labourers) means they will be happy, eager, loyal and produce better quality work.

## Themes they care about



## VALUES

- **Empathy:** Genuine care for the mental and physical wellbeing of their team.
- **Flexibility:** Creating benefits and frameworks that suit the individual.
- **Inclusivity:** Respect and openness with team members and clients from all backgrounds.
- **Encouragement:** Educating tradies of tomorrow and nurturing them through their apprenticeship. Helping others achieve their goals either within the company or elsewhere.
- **Communication:** Sharing feedback with team members and regularly checking in with them to support their professional development.
- **Recognition:** Celebrating milestones and wins across the team.

## WINS BY

- Being a public face of good culture, to both set standards, and attract and retain talent.
- Building rituals within their business that provide opportunities to build strong team connection.
- Creating a safe mental, physical and professional space for all on site; building a culture that is open, supportive and positive.
- Nurturing and teaching apprentices the trade, taking them under their wing.
- Sharing knowledge and experience with peers, community groups and industry bodies, helping others improve culture.
- Organising and participating in industry events, in person and virtually.

## TOOLS & SUPPORT

- Social media, for sharing stories of how they work, how they operate to attract talent, and how they deal with challenges.
- Monitoring tools and surveys, to assess and manage business culture, the same way they do job progress and profitability.
- Support networks of other Culture Leaders who feel the same, or who have experience working through similar challenges.
- Creates their own tools and templates, which they share as open source documents for others to use.
- Leans into providing support to others, but needs to be supported by industry bodies, brands and business partners to prevent burnout.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to reward them for their role in improving culture.
- Opportunity to partner to amplify their messages, tools etc. so more trades benefit from their work & they aren't bearing the load alone.
- Challenge is knowing they are "getting it right"—opportunity for industry-backed culture standards to prevent the guesswork.
- Challenge is overindexing on time spent developing their people and not freeing themselves up to tackle other business challenges. Opportunity to help them find the correct balance.

## MINDSET JOURNEY





# INTERVIEWEES & EXPERTS

Our insights started with interviewing Australia's most ambitious tradie small business owners.

Industry experts working outside of small businesses shared their viewpoints, too.



A TEAM PAINTING PROFESSIONALS

# Interviewee profiles



  
CULTURE LEADER

TINY STAYS, ZADIE

## Aimee Stanton

Trade: Plumber

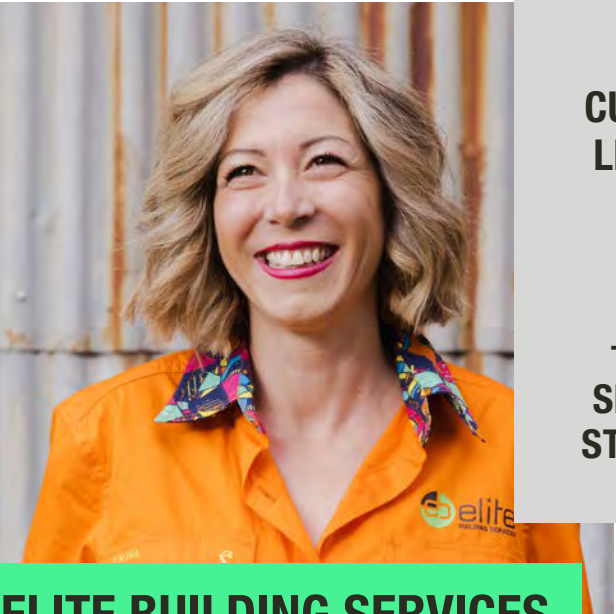
Age: late 20's

Location: Melbourne, VIC

Aimee's career began as a mechanical plumber on sprawling commercial sites, where she witnessed a work culture in which her bosses lived solely to work.

As a result, Aimee decided to partner with her brother to launch Tiny Stays, tiny rentable homes that she builds and maintains, where tradespeople (and anyone else) can go to get a break from running a business. She's set on inspiring the next generation to uncover their own personal "why," so they can feel fulfilled everyday.

[tinystays.co](http://tinystays.co)  
[zadieworkwear.com.au](http://zadieworkwear.com.au)



  
CULTURE LEADER

  
SERVICE STEWARD

ELITE BUILDING SERVICES

## Bek Bishop

Trade: Builder

Age: early 40's

Location: Pakenham, VIC


Bek Bishop isn't just about building homes — she's building foundational support for all kinds of tradespeople, from women entering the industry to building experts who need clear information so they can move at speed.

To Bek, each home Elite builds is a privilege she takes very seriously. She's committed to bringing the customer along the entire journey and extends that sense of hospitality to other business owners.

Bek believes a rising tide lifts all boats, and works with R U OK? And the Master Builders Association of Victoria as a Council Member.

[elitebuilding.com.au](http://elitebuilding.com.au)



  
BUSINESS OPTIMISER

ZEBRA PLUMBING

## Byron Slabbert

Trade: Plumber

Age: early 40's

Location: Melbourne, VIC

Byron's dad wanted him to take up a trade, but in his youth Byron wanted to follow in his dad's footsteps and become an accountant. He hated it and became a plumber with a view to running a sustainable business that combined profit with ethical operations.

Byron's passionate about this balancing act. Plumbing is competitive and finding leads is harder than ever.

By keeping on top of marketing costs, assessing long-term benefits and making sure his service is up to scratch, he's growing Zebra Plumbing sustainably.

[zebraplumbing.com.au](http://zebraplumbing.com.au)

# Interviewee profiles



  
NICHE  
SPECIALIST

**HUMAN ELECTRICAL DESIGN**

## Cameron & Clarissa Betts

Trade: Electrician & interior designer

Age: early 40's

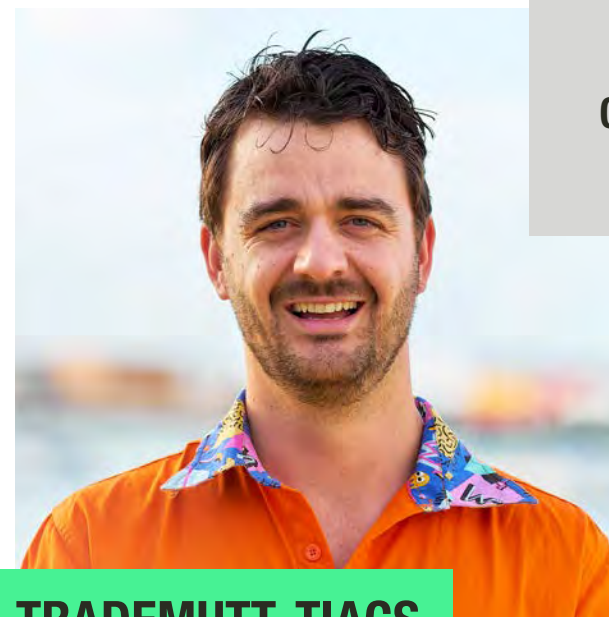
Location: Montrose, VIC

Cameron and Clarissa are committed to ensuring Human Electrical Design is a different kind of electrical business — one built on solid workflow systems, diverse experience and an unwavering dedication to positive culture, which comes from witnessing poor practices in their own apprenticeships.

Together, they're dedicated to looking after apprentices, fostering a culture of care, and emphasising mental health days.

Their approach is rooted in patience and guidance, ensuring young people are nurtured rather than reprimanded for mistakes.

[hed.net.au](http://hed.net.au)



  
CULTURE  
LEADER

**TRADEMUTT, TIACS**

## Ed Ross

Trade: Carpenter

Age: early 30's


Location: Brisbane, QLD

Ed and his business partner Dan trained in carpentry. When a close friend lost their battle with mental health, they pivoted to found TradeMutt workwear and This Is A Conversation Starter (TIACS) — two businesses that support tradies in this area.

TradeMutt's high quality, attention-grabbing workwear starts conversations on site. The profits fund the TIACS mental health helpline, with an emphasis on early intervention and continuity of care.

[trademutt.com](http://trademutt.com)  
[tiacs.org](http://tiacs.org)



  
SERVICE  
STEWARD

**A TEAM PAINTING PROFESSIONALS**

## James Wilkinson

Trade: Painter

Age: mid 30's

Location: Adelaide, SA

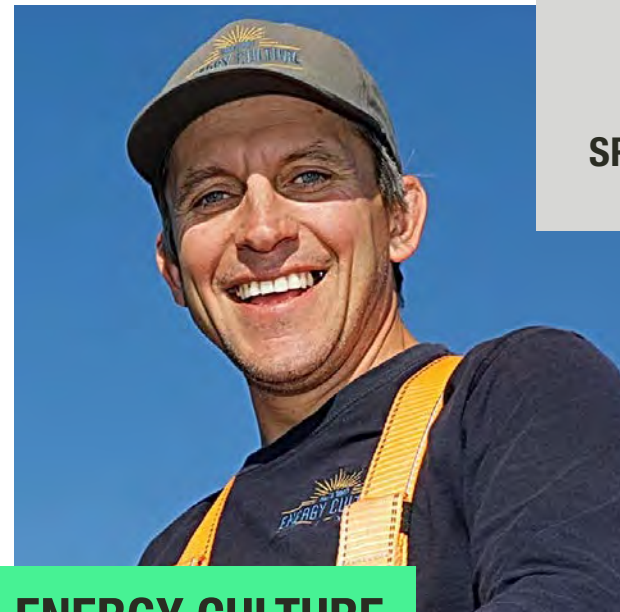
James tried his hand at a few trades before settling on painting. After his apprenticeship and a couple of years working under someone, he went out on his own.

In painting, work that's low standard is immediately obvious to the customer. That's why James sets his quality bar high and focuses on training his staff to deliver next-level finish and service.

He's noticed his peers seem to be struggling to find business expertise and advice, whereas he seeks it out to avoid learning by doing where he can.

[ateampainting.com.au](http://ateampainting.com.au)

# Interviewee profiles



**ENERGY CULTURE**

## Joe Edginton

Trade: Electrician

Age: mid 40's

Location: Sydney, NSW

Joe's father was in the trades as a roof thatcher in the UK. Where his dad is part of a rich tradition spanning hundreds of years, Joe's electrical business is devoted to the future, specialising in sustainable and renewable energy.

For Joe, the internal culture of the business is a cornerstone of delivering quality service. He's passionate about solar and battery-stored energy and being an early adopter of the tech means he got a head start on the competition.

Energy Culture has won several awards for business leadership, which is a testament to Joe's efforts developing a brand and mission his team believe in and work to achieve.

[energyculture.com.au](http://energyculture.com.au)



**NEXT GEN CONCRETE & EXCAVATION**

## Joseph Rodriguez

Trade: Concreter

Age: early 30's

Location: Melbourne, VIC

Joseph's calm, considered approach to running a business came from working under others who were the opposite. As a result, Next Gen is founded on a culture of mutual respect, support and responsibility, from apprentice to boss.

The other side of building a positive culture is making getting the work done easier. Joseph invests in job management and automation so that everything works smoothly.

This makes the experience better for his team, leading to healthy working relationships and long-term employees.

[nextgenconcrete.au](http://nextgenconcrete.au)



**PLUMBIFY**

## Matthew Zubrinich

Trade: Plumber

Age: mid 30's

Location: Wingfield, SA

Matt set out to build a trade business where everybody has opportunities to lead. He realised other business leaders were ignoring fresh ideas and instead wanted to be the first to adopt them. This means learning about new technologies and embedding them into how he does business.

Matt's Plumbify podcast gets thousands of listens. His TikTok following means he gets the pick of talented apprentices who find him on the platform, where he's inspiring the next generation of plumbers.

[plumbify.com.au](http://plumbify.com.au)

# Interviewee profiles



- BUSINESS OPTIMISER
- SERVICE STEWARD

**LEGENDARY PLUMBERS**

## Mitch Boerner

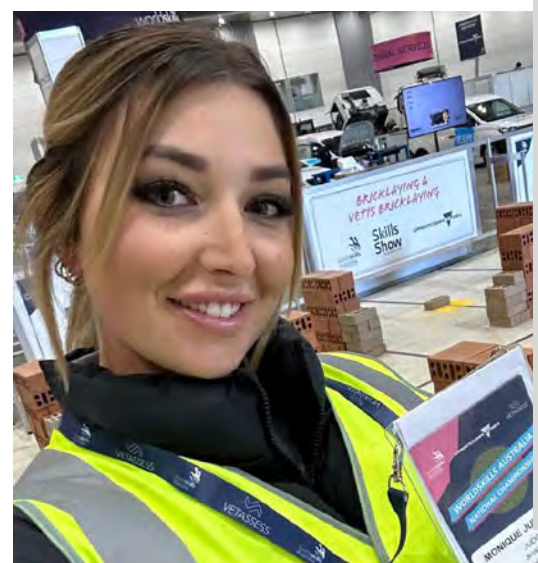
Trade: Plumbing business owner  
 Age: mid 30's  
 Location: Cheltenham, VIC

Mitch's background is in real estate, so when he and his brother joined forces and went into business together, they applied a 'location, location, location' approach to finding work.

Their secret to success is creating systems that make it easy, efficient and enjoyable to get work done.

Legendary Plumbers embraces automation, digitised admin and polished service, resulting in smooth maintenance plumbing service that customers are willing to pay for.

[legendaryplumbers.com.au](http://legendaryplumbers.com.au)



- CULTURE LEADER
- NICHE SPECIALIST

**MJ BRICKLAYING**

## Monique Juratovac

Trade: Bricklayer  
 Age: mid 20's  
 Location: Brisbane, QLD

Monique built her business alone, without support or mentorship. She had to learn the ropes the hard way, tackling business growth without a clear strategy.

Facing burnout, Monique found a new format to express herself; a tradie podcast called 'Let's Talk Tradies', where she shares her own journey and unpicks challenges others have faced.

The show provides a platform for tradies to share stories about business management, key lessons and what it's like being a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field.

[@monique.juratovac](https://www.instagram.com/monique.juratovac)



- NICHE SPECIALIST

**EVOBUILT**

## Robby Kruyer

Trade: Builder  
 Age: mid 30's  
 Location: Rowville, VIC

Robby is passionate about quality, sustainable homes that outlive their owners. He's dedicated his company to being one of Australia's leaders in passive homes, championing new building technologies and products from local and European suppliers.

A key driver is learning new, better ways of doing things, which means using a business coach and upskilling his team to build to increasingly high standards.

Collaboration is central to Evobuilt. The old way of keeping your books closed is dead and gone, and the team share knowledge with anyone who asks.

[evobuilt.com.au](http://evobuilt.com.au)



- CULTURE LEADER
- NICHE SPECIALIST

**BRICKS BY TY**

## Tyrone Sienna

Trade: Bricklayer  
 Age: early 20's  
 Location: Melbourne, VIC

Tyrone went through the classic path for a self-employed brickie—apprenticeship, working under someone for a year, then going out on his own. On this journey, he was struck by how outdated or incomplete his training was.

Ty launched his social media channel, Bricks by Ty, to bridge the educational gap he experienced as an apprentice.

Through relatable and digestible tutorial content, he's looking to share his own hard-fought knowledge with young people entering the industry.

[@bricksbyty](https://www.instagram.com/bricksbyty)



# Expert acknowledgements



**PREFORMED WALLS**

## Robert Czerkas

Location: Melbourne, VIC

Rob saw a stream of older tradies exiting the industry with injuries or unable to cope with the physical demands of the job. He thought there must be a better way to build without the physical grit.

Rob's company Preformed Walls has developed prefabricated walls that reduce manual handling and repetitive lifting. They're still in the early days but seeing strong results in trials.

He's hoping that innovations like Preformed's technologies can keep experience in the industry for longer.

[preformedwalls.com.au](http://preformedwalls.com.au)



**ALYKAN ELECTRICAL, SPEEDHEAT**

## Sally Higgs

Location: Melbourne, VIC

Sally co-founded her business in partnership with her husband in 2017, but her background in the technology sector meant she wanted to do things a little differently. She places a huge emphasis on relationship building, encouraging her team to say "we'll find a way" rather than "no, that's not our job".

Sally believes that discovering the right niche has been key to Alykan and Speedheat's success, letting her optimise the businesses entirely around the right size of jobs that they can handle, to deliver high quality great work that customers love.

[alykan.com.au](http://alykan.com.au)  
[speedheat.com.au](http://speedheat.com.au)



**BUILTGRID**

## Toby Loft

Location: Melbourne, VIC

Toby grew up in a family electrical business, developing a strong work ethic, an understanding of customers needs and supply vs. demand.

Previously, he drove strategy for major tool brands and trade wholesalers, where he saw so many problems with the flow of construction projects, he founded BuiltGrid as a solution.

BuiltGrid is a platform for builders and builders and suppliers to manage procurement. Trades and suppliers access projects with improved visibility, and builders connect to trades and suppliers to get projects done.

Toby wants professionals to maximise work and minimise downtime, saving money and enabling more homes to be built efficiently.

[builtgrid.com](http://builtgrid.com)

# What now?

## Future opportunities don't just happen.

They happen because businesses understand their purpose, their advantage, and their customers—then dedicate focus to the opportunity that makes the most sense to them.

Trout, Next and Superseed specialise in helping businesses bring new opportunities to life, through creativity, innovation pilots and ventures.

To develop your brand, pilot a new product or service, or for ventures expertise, reach out to our team leaders:

[catch@trout.com.au](mailto:catch@trout.com.au)



**TROUT**

Emily Pockley

General Manager

+61 421 286 322

[emily.pockley@trout.com.au](mailto:emily.pockley@trout.com.au)



**SUPERSEED**

Chris Pattenden

Managing Partner

+61 413 595 749

[chris@superseed.ventures](mailto:chris@superseed.ventures)



**next+**

Nic Hodges

Head of Innovation

+61 421 033 359

[nic@thisisnext.com.au](mailto:nic@thisisnext.com.au)

# Credits

## REPORT AUTHORS

Clare Acheson  
Olivia Ellis

## CREATIVE TEAM

Flynn Wheeler  
Joshua Braines-Mead  
Martin Pribble  
Nigel Ling  
Vlad Stanojevic  
Will McKenzie

## RESEARCH TEAM

Clare Acheson  
Olivia Ellis  
Brook Smith  
Callum Jones

## DIGITAL TEAM

Danelle Barugh  
Lily Keating  
Suvi Thammasarn  
Will Robertson



For more information, reach out to  
[catch@trout.com.au](mailto:catch@trout.com.au)

**TROUT** | **nex+** | **SUPERSEED**

Trout, Next and Superseed work together with ambitious businesses to turn ideas into action.

[futuretradie.report](https://futuretradie.report)