

EVALUATION OF THE 2025 SENIOR ENTREPRENEURS MENTORING PROGRAMME

PRIMETIME

This is the second cohort of the **PRIMETIME** programme. The first, held in 2024, ran for twelve months, and supported 19 participants aged 50 and over. In 2025, the programme was delivered over six months, supporting 17 individuals in the same age group. Drawing on lessons from the initial cohort where we offered monthly workshops complemented by optional mentoring, we refined the approach to focus on six months of mentoring, with participants also gaining access to Chamber workshops and training opportunities.

The overall aim of the programme was to

Empower and support entrepreneurs aged 50 and above who are looking to start or scale their business ventures.

By the end of the programme participants were expected to

- **Clarified their intentions** – Determined whether starting a business was truly the right path for them.
- **Built capability** – Gained the personal confidence and foundational business skills necessary to operate a successful venture.
- **Created a clear plan** – Developed a practical and achievable plan to guide the next steps in bringing their business idea to life.
- **Appreciated the value of mentorship** – Understood the importance of having a mentor and been encouraged to continue a mentor relationship beyond the programme.

Programme

The programme comprised of:

- Personal mentoring tailored to their business goals.
- Professional development through the Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce (NTCC) training programmes.
- Regular networking opportunities at the Chamber's monthly Business After 5 events.
- Complimentary Chamber of Commerce membership for the duration of the programme.

Project Delivery

Participants made an online application. Selection included an interview with the Programme Coordinator. Each participant also worked with the Programme Coordinator as a mentor and had access to a range of workshops and networking events through the NTCC.

Evaluation

Ten participants (60%) completed the questionnaire at the end of the programme

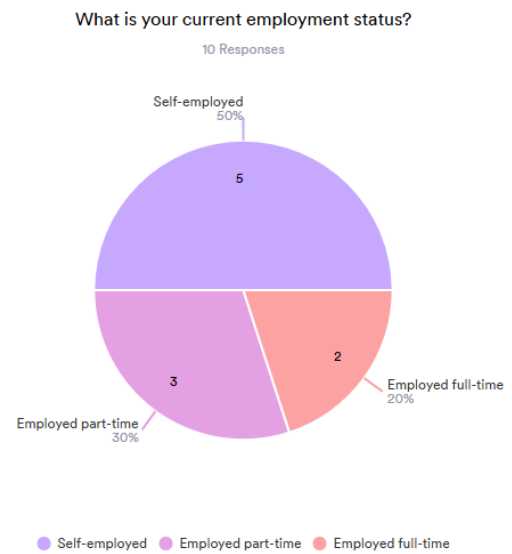
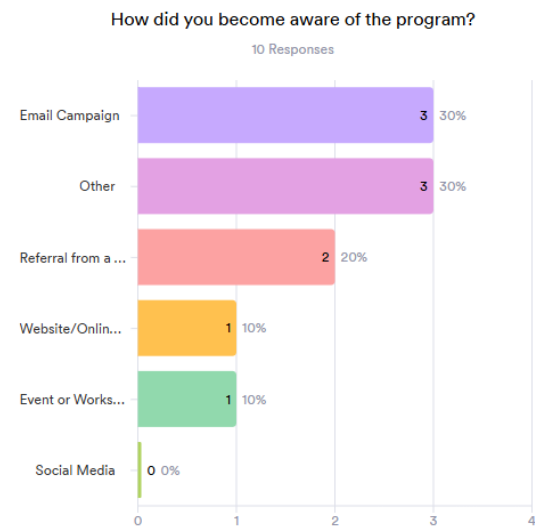
Participant Demographics

Age		Gender			Ethnicity					Location	
	Number	Female	Male	Other	NZ European	Māori	Pacific Peoples	Asian	Other	N	T
50 – 54	10	9	1	0	7	0	0	0	3		
55 – 59	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3		
60 – 64	4	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	2		
65 - 69	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
70+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Total	17	13	4	0	9	0	0	0	8	10	7

N = Nelson

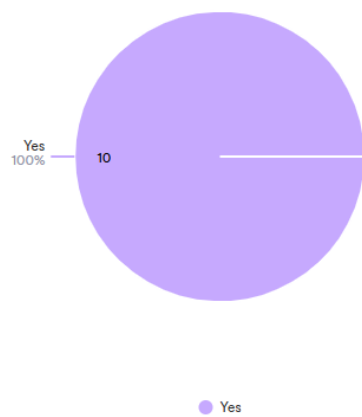
T = Tasman

Survey Results



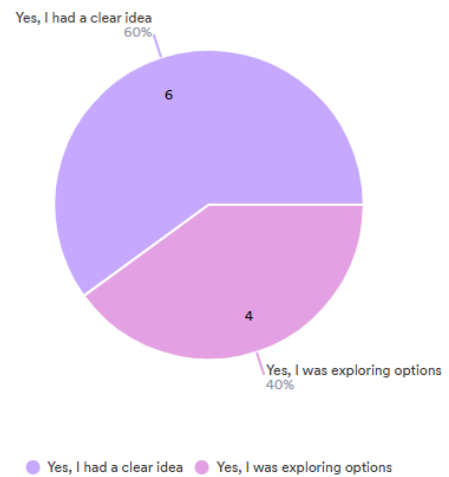
Do you have previous experience in running or managing a business?

10 Responses



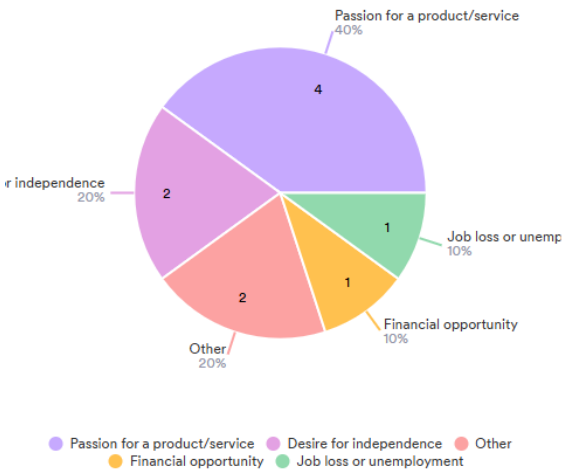
Was your business idea in mind when you started the program?

10 Responses



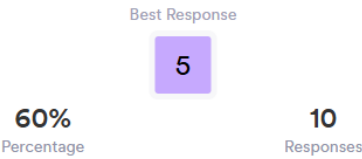
What motivated you to start a business?

10 Responses



The program effectively achieved its aims and objectives.

10 Responses



Data	Response	%
5	6	60%
4	4	40%
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%

Mentoring and guidance provided during the program met my expectations.

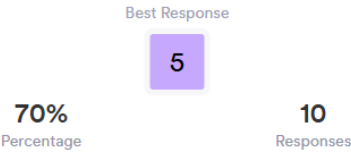
10 Responses



Data	Response	%
5	9	90%
4	1	10%
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%

The program was responsive to my individual needs.

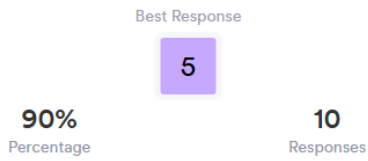
10 Responses



Data	Response	%
5	7	70%
4	3	30%
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%

Support and resources offered by the program were helpful.

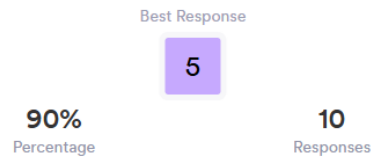
10 Responses



Data	Response	%
5	9	90%
4	1	10%
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%

Overall, I am satisfied with the program.

10 Responses



Data	Response	%
5	9	90%
4	1	10%
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%

Please share any additional comments or feedback about the program.

7 Responses- 3 Empty

Data	Responses
I found the program amazing. Stephen was exceptional and I really connected with his thought processes and structures which allowed me to make significant gains in developing my business. I struggled in my past business trying to do things on my own which really restricted my growth. By having a business mentor, gave me the support and confidence I desperately needed. I highly recommend this program. Keep up the great work!	1
Stephen was fabulous to work with. He was flexible with the times we met because I was unavailable during his usual hours of work. His resources were timely and thorough and he adjusted them to meet my needs. Even though I have not yet launch my business, these resources and discussions we had will be hugely beneficial to me when the time is right. Thank you Stephen for all your work, guidance and calm, optimistic approach. I truly enjoyed working with you and your work will help me continue with my goals when I'm ready.	1
I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this programme. Stephen's mentoring has been very helpful for me to figure out the specifics of my new business branch. His guidance helped me to consider different options and approach other small businesses in our region. He brought a strong business lens to our sessions and provided helpful summaries. I am motivated to launch as soon as possible :-)	1
This platform provided me with support and confidence to move forward. We need mentors who have this level of experience. Thank you for the opportunity.	1
Despite a fair amount of personal trauma going on in my life during this time, the support that Stephen Broad-Paul gave me was more than I could have hoped for. He is empathetic, caring, and cuts to the chase. I will never forget our first meeting when he was wearing Mr Monopoly pants 🤔 Due to extenuating personal circumstances, I feel that I have missed out on a lot of potential growth. It would be great if the program was able to be accessed more than once. Saying that, my meetings with Stephen have provided me with a lot of guidance for my next steps.	1
Stephen is exemplary. He was always encouraging, knowledgeable and gave incredibly clear advice and direction. I'm very thankful and he's a real blessing	1
Stephen Broad-Paul was my mentor and he is amazing!!!! He's definitely the best mentor that I have ever had. Nelson is very fortunate to have someone who is so passionate, caring and knowledgeable living in our community and sharing his skills with others. I sincerely hope that many other business owners, and aspiring business owners, get an opportunity to develop their businesses based on his knowledge and advice.	1

Summary and Recommendations

With 17 participants aged 50 and over, the programme achieved its core aims: to help individuals clarify their entrepreneurial intentions, develop foundational business skills, and build practical business plans.

Feedback from the post-programme survey, completed by 60% of participants, confirms the value of the programme's tailored mentoring model and the importance of peer and professional networks in supporting older entrepreneurs. The demographics reveal strong engagement from women and NZ European participants, particularly in the 50–54 age range, with scope to increase participation from a wider age and ethnic demographic in future cohorts.

Key strengths of the programme included:

- Personalised mentoring aligned with each participant's business goals
- Access to Chamber training and events that enhanced professional confidence
- The opportunity to test ideas in a safe and supportive environment

Recommendations for future iterations:

1. **Extend diversity outreach** to better engage Māori, Pacific Peoples, and other underrepresented communities.
2. **Enhance marketing** to reach a broader spectrum of participants across the 55+ age range.
3. **Maintain the six-month structure** but consider optional extensions or alumni mentoring circles.
4. **Continue partnerships** with the Office of the Seniors, Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council to ensure access to relevant resources and support.

Overall, the 2025 PRIMETIME cohort has reaffirmed the value of targeted mentoring and capability-building for older entrepreneurs in the region, contributing positively to local innovation and economic development.