



SURF COAST SHIRE

# Business Barometer Survey 2019

## Key Findings

# Business Barometer Survey 2019

The annual Business Barometer, now in its second year had 135 respondents. This is a 30% increase on last year.



**89%** of businesses indicate last year's performance was the **same or better** than the previous year

Compared to 2018 Business Barometer Survey business performance **rose by 9%** with 89% of businesses saying their business performed better, the outlook is confident going into 2020.

## Survey responses

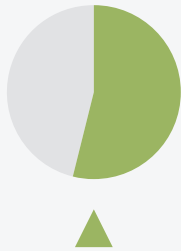
### Business location



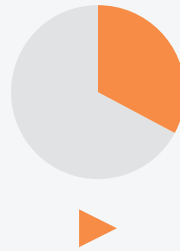
The results track the confidence and conditions of doing business on the Surf Coast. Whilst we recognise the expressed sentiment may not necessarily reflect your own business experience due to the limited sample size, increased participation in future Business Barometer Surveys will create a more accurate reflection of conditions moving forward.

# Top 3 key findings

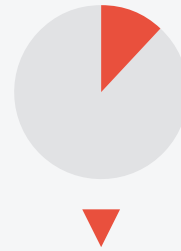
## 1 2019 Barometer Business performance



**54%** of businesses indicate last year's performance was **better** than the previous year



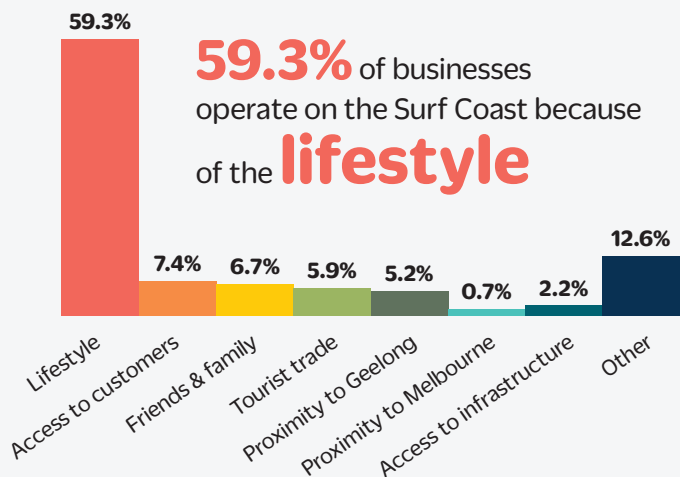
**35%** of businesses indicate last year's performance was the **same** as the previous year



**11%** of businesses indicate last year's performance was **worse** than the previous year

## 2 Reason for doing business in the Surf Coast Shire

**Lifestyle** remains the primary reason people are choosing to operate on the Surf Coast. It is important lifestyle attributes are realised and maintained to encourage creative small and micro businesses.



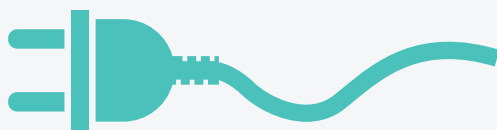
**59.3%** of businesses operate on the Surf Coast because of the **lifestyle**

## 3 Biggest barrier to doing business

**Energy** continues to be the biggest negative impact **(50%)**

Half of businesses indicated increased energy costs was a major issue impacting business. Lease costs / government policy (29%) and staff attraction / retention (31%) were also key concerns.

### TOP 3 issues impacting business:



Increased energy costs  
**50%**



Lease costs / government policy  
**29%**



Staff attraction / retention  
**31%**

# Who responded to the survey

## Business type

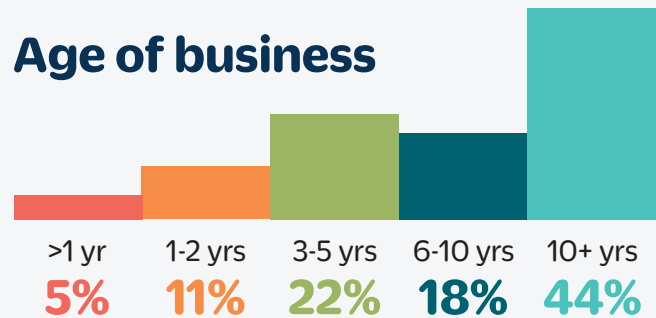
**25% of businesses** are Accommodation & Food Services, 22% Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, and 17% Retail Trade.



**42.5%**

of businesses are **home based**, opting not to operate from commercial premises. Only 11% were considering relocating to a commercial premise in the next 2 years.

## Age of business



**44%** of businesses are more than 10 years old  
**22%** have been operating for 3 to 5 years

# Investment

## Investing in building, technology and plant equipment

Nearly half **intend to invest** in plant and equipment (48%) in the next 12 months, with 33% considering investment in building/floorspace.



**61%** of respondents are ready to invest in technology in the next 12 months

12% of businesses buy **100%** of their goods & services on the Surf Coast

## Business expenditure

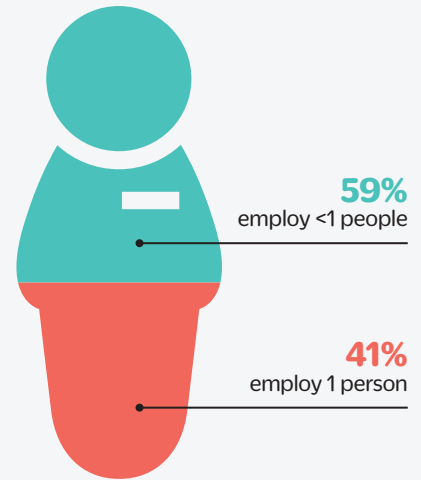
**12%** of businesses buy **100%** of their goods and services on the Surf Coast and a further 37% source 50% – 75% of goods and services on the Surf Coast. Businesses are willing to buy local and support other local businesses.

# Employment

## Employment figures

**41%** of businesses employ only **one person**.

Businesses with **over 10 employees** were mainly hospitality, manufacturing, wholesale construction and allied health sectors.



## Future employment



**52%** of businesses intend to employ **one** new staff member next year

## Staff retention and attraction

It is becoming **increasingly difficult** to attract and retain professionals (up 5% on last year). The positions most difficult to fill continue to be hospitality\*, professionals, retail, and technical & trade workers.



**21%** of employers had difficulty filling positions over the **summer** compared to 35% any time of year

*\*Hospitality figures include chefs and housekeepers.*

## TOP 4 most difficult positions to fill:



Hospitality\*  
**23%**



Professionals  
**17%**



Retail  
**12%**



Technical & trade  
**12%**

# Online and becoming more digital

## TOP 3 barriers

preventing businesses from expanding their online presence and digital business activity:

- #1 Time and effort required to implement a new system (37% – up 10% from 2018)
- #2 Cost of implementing a new system (26%)
- #3 Lack of information and training or technological expertise in the business (20%)



## Digital products

Over 60% of businesses are generating sales on the internet. The use of Facebook and Instagram continue to grow in popularity. LinkedIn (22%) and electronic direct mail (32%) are both up by 5% from last year.

## TOP 3 digital products used:



72%

Facebook



71%

Website



56%

Instagram

## Digital training

32% of businesses express a need to be trained in the use of Facebook

31% express a need to be trained in the use of Instagram

29% express a need to be trained in the use of websites

25% express a need to be trained in the use of email marketing



Email marketing is highlighted as a skills gap, and a need for further training.

2019 now the second year in distribution the Business Barometer Survey aims to track local business confidence. Developed in partnership with Trader Associations, the survey is conducted annually and insights gained are provided to the local business community. Trader Associations provide an opportunity for business to hear about the key findings and ask question on insights. Data was collected via an online survey distributed to approximately 5,000 business on the Surf Coast.



Council's Economic Development & Tourism Unit provides a range of reports on the economy and tourism.

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