



# BRUNSWICK HEADS BRE SURVEY SUMMARY 2006

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

The second formal Brunswick Heads Business Expansion and Retention (BRE) Survey was undertaken by the Brunswick Heads Chamber of Commerce with funding assistance from the Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD) in October/November 2006.

Of the 100 businesses surveyed, 66 responses were received and analysed. This very pleasing 66% response rate is higher than most surveys around the state and 6% higher than the response rate for the 2003 BRE Survey. It is indicative of the level of enthusiasm of businesses for the town and its economic growth and sustainability strategies.

The BRE Survey Report provides the community with invaluable data for application in three main areas.

1. The BREP Survey provides a useful tool to evaluate the success of the economic renewal strategies and projects that have been implemented in the town by the Chamber of Commerce and the Business & Tourism Group over the past three years.
2. The survey provides a 2006 "snapshot" of the Brunswick business sector, with very useful research material for prospective new businesses, for Council and for use in grant funding applications.
3. The identification of major issues and suggestions for opportunities or improvements from survey respondents will provide great input into the most urgent priorities of those yet to be undertaken projects listed in the "Taking Care of Brunswick" Strategy 2004-2009. In addition, the survey provides an excellent opportunity for the business community to suggest additions or changes of direction to economic renewal strategies and actions planned by the Chamber and the various project teams in the near future.



New South Wales  
Department of State and  
Regional Development

A Brunswick Heads Chamber of Commerce initiative  
**Brunswick Heads.** Simple Pleasures.

## OVERVIEW

*The survey confirms that revitalisation of the town's business sector of has continued over the last three years, with the greening and streetscaping of Mullumbimbi and Park Sts, new shopfront upgrades, expansion of existing businesses, increased trade and turnover and a healthy increase in employment opportunities. There has been a steady stream of fresh new business energy coming into town, with eclectic styles and products, and a leisure and eco-tourism sector is beginning to emerge. Businesses are very optimistic about the future, expecting their businesses to grow and provide more jobs.*

*Planning issues with Council have settled right down, but the basics of street maintenance, cleaning and rubbish and lighting remain of great concern. Despite the introduction of timed parking to share the available spaces, parking is a major challenge due to increased car use, Brunswick's popularity, and long-term strategies need to be considered which are compatible with the preservation of the village atmosphere. The serious lack of public transport to other towns only adds to the problem.*

*Brunswick business people on the whole are community minded and proactive, interested in co-operative efforts to promote and improve their much loved town and lifestyle, and are open to innovation, professional advice, risk taking and planning for sustainable prosperity. A host of ideas with recurring themes for further physical and economic improvement of the town have been suggested.*

*The laid back village lifestyle and natural assets are highly valued by the Brunswick business community, The Simple Pleasures Campaign to differentiate Brunswick Heads from other coastal towns has been well received by the business community, admired by towns all over the state, and acknowledged an example of best practice in creative town branding.*

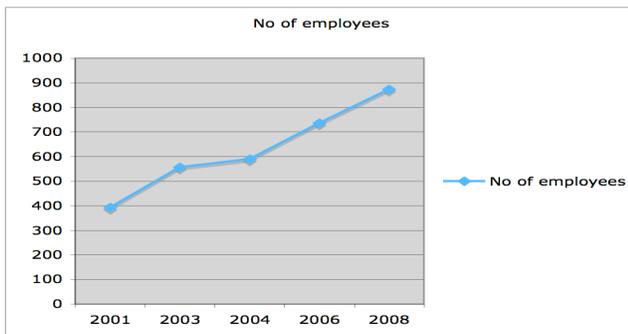
---

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**Partners:** BH Chamber of Commerce & DSRD  
**Co-ordinators:** Carol Kelly & Kim Rosen  
**Sponsors:** Eagle Insurance, TURSA & Hotel Brunswick

## BRUNSWICK BUSINESS PROFILE

- 84% of Bruns businesses are independently owned. Only 3% are franchises
- Over half (51%) began their businesses in the last 5 years.
- Brunswick has no industrial or manufacturing base.
- Retail is the most common type of business, followed by hospitality & accommodation (up from 2003), then health & well-being. There are 22 eateries. The professional sector has grown & a leisure & eco-tourism sector is emerging
- Jan & Dec are the best trading months & extending out further to Feb. July & August replace June & July as the worst trading months. 10.6% report no pattern at all.
- 74% of businesses sell more than 50% of their products locally, down 10% from 2003.
- 53.6% source more than half of their raw materials locally, double that in 2003.
- Local trade accounts for 69% of business-well up from 2003
- Brunswick is still characterised by a large number of small businesses, but only 9% employ less than 2 people compared with 15% in 2003. 45% employ between 2 & 4.5 staff, similar to 2003. The number of larger businesses (ie employ > 10 people) has increased from 12% to 23%.
- The 66 businesses employ 409 people. (This extrapolates to 738 for the town). About half the jobs are full-time.
- Employment has increased by 19.8% in the last 2 years, double what was anticipated & is expected to increase again by 18.6% over the next 2 years.



- About half (56%) the businesses have recruiting problems, mainly in the skilled areas. (especially in specialised areas)
- Most sought after skills are café hospitality, retail customer service, communication & people skills, & computer literacy.
- Staff are more highly regarded by their employers than 3 years ago, with good or excellent ratings for skill level (89%) attitude to work (97%) and productivity (94%)
- 14 businesses are interested in youth mentoring (9 in 2003)
- 29% of businesses are considering expansion in the next 2 years and another 29% are unsure. Lack of suitable premises in town the main barrier. No-one is considering relocating out of town compared with 5 businesses in 2003.
- 13.6% of businesses are involved in international trade.
- The top requests for information, advice or training are: Marketing (39%), management training (15% - up from 2003), industry relations (11%) & consumer affairs (11%).
- 61% rate themselves between 7 & 10 on innovation, 55% on risk taking, 55% on willingness to seek professional advice & 60% (up from 2003) on organising & planning.
- 74% expect the demand for their products/services to increase in the next 2 years, mainly due to popularity, population & visitation increases or willingness to adapt their product in response to demographic changes.
- Factors impacting negatively on profits in the next 2 years include rent increases, competition, & transportation costs.
- Council policies have dropped down the list of concerns

## LIVING & WORKING IN BRUNS

- 59% of businesses believe that being in Brunswick is a help to their business (up from 52% in 2003), with 35% ambivalent. No-one believes it is a hindrance.
- In fact 67% rated Brunswick as an excellent (14%) or good (53%) place to do business. No-one scored it poor.
- As a place to live and work, The big winner was the climate, with 91% rating it as good or excellent, followed by schools with 81% rating schools as good or excellent. The big losers this survey were land costs (61% rating very poor or poor) & followed by cultural facilities (49%) and building costs (44%).
- Energy costs, rates, labour costs & transportation costs were rated mainly as fair. There were mixed reactions to housing, sporting & recreation facilities, health services and freedom from social problems.

### SERVICES OF GREATEST CONCERN

Concern	Extent	Comparison with 2003
1. Public transport	33%	worse (29%)
2. Parking	26%	better (37%)
3. Street repair	23%	similar (24%)
4. Street lighting	20%	worse (16%)
5. Street signage	18%	worse (12%)
5. DA process	18%	much better (29%)
7. Street cleaning	17%	similar (19%)
8. Recycling	15%	worse (12%)

The stand out improvements were in parking & the DA process, but improvements are still required. Public transport has moved up to be the biggest concern, while street lighting & signage are concerning more businesses than in 2003. The problems with the basic Council services & facilities were articulated in detail.

- Suggested improvements to the town were extensive, covering social amenity, infrastructure & services, the protection & beautification of the environment.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Maintain the town's identity & character – keep it simple
- More own beautification, streetscaping, more trees
- A makeover of Tweed St
- Improvement of foreshore parks & amenities – seating, picnic tables, toilets, paths & boardwalks, sculptures
- Develop public transport & more parking strategies
- Better street maintenance, better lighting (Council)
- Clean up the town & develop better recycling & waste disposal options & programs
- More cultural facilities & festivals eg cinema, art centre, bigger library & museum
- More walkways, cycleways, boatramps & recreational facilities especially for youth
- Improve visitor amenities (7 day VIC) & holiday accom
- Encourage eco tourism activities & businesses
- Encourage unique & eclectic style shops eg nostalgic, 60's, patisserie, chocolate shop; plus homewares & hardware, more banking options & greater interest by landlords
- Another buy local campaign strategy & more local support
- Establishment of a Marine College & associated precinct
- Get more people more involved more often

