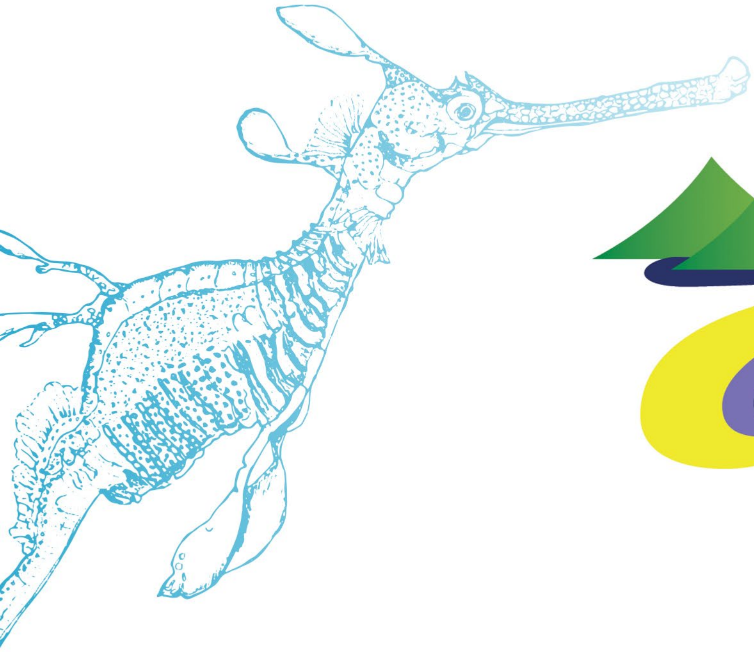


Break O'Day
COUNCIL

Business Survey Report
July 2022

Version: 2 – Date: July, 2018

Introduction

Objectives

This survey is part of a biennial local business survey, which initially began in August 2019 and has adapted. Council undertakes the Survey.

Data Collection

Break O'Day updated the survey to its current format in March 2022. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in the Appendix.

Data Collection Period

The online survey was available to local government area business operators and owners via Council's website, from the 28th March 2022 – 30th June 2022.

Data Analysis:

The data within this report was analysed by Council Officers using Survey Monkey.

Word Tagging Frequency

Verbatim responses for open questions were collated and entered into analytical software. This analysis 'counts' the number of times a particular word or phrase appears and, based on the frequency of that word or phrase, a font size is generated. The larger the font size, the more frequently the word or sentiment is mentioned.

Responses

There were 36 responses to the survey.

Comparison to Previous Survey

As the purpose of the July 2022 survey has adapted to be applicable to all business operators in Break O'Day region, it has limited the ability for the report to compare results between surveys.

Results Snapshot

Types of businesses

- A total of 43% of respondents were less than 5 years in operation demonstrating strong growth of new businesses.
- There has been a 10% decrease of businesses who experienced growth of revenue than previous survey.
- There has been a 10% increase of businesses that noticed a decrease of revenue.
  - Of this, the majority experienced an 11-50% decrease in revenue.
- Of the last months, the majority of customers have been from interstate. This is unusual, as majority of customers within the last 12 months have been from Tasmania. This occurrence was often attributed to the opening of international and state borders.

Jobs and Skills

- 50% of businesses expected to employ more staff in the next 12 months.
- Majority of businesses (71%) employed 1-5 employees.

Market

- Main challenges of doing business in Break O'Day centred on finding and retaining customers and employees. This challenge also included finding appropriate housing.
- Inconsistent tourism was presented as a significant challenge for operators conducting business. This challenge was presented by businesses who either directly or indirectly benefited from tourism.
- Supporting events/festivals, supporting and promoting local business and continuing provision of infrastructure and facilities were identified as the main opportunities Break O'Day Council should continue to focus on over the next 12 months.

Government Assistance and Council Support

- 80% of respondents have not found either BODC or Government policies to adversely affect their decision to develop new business initiatives.

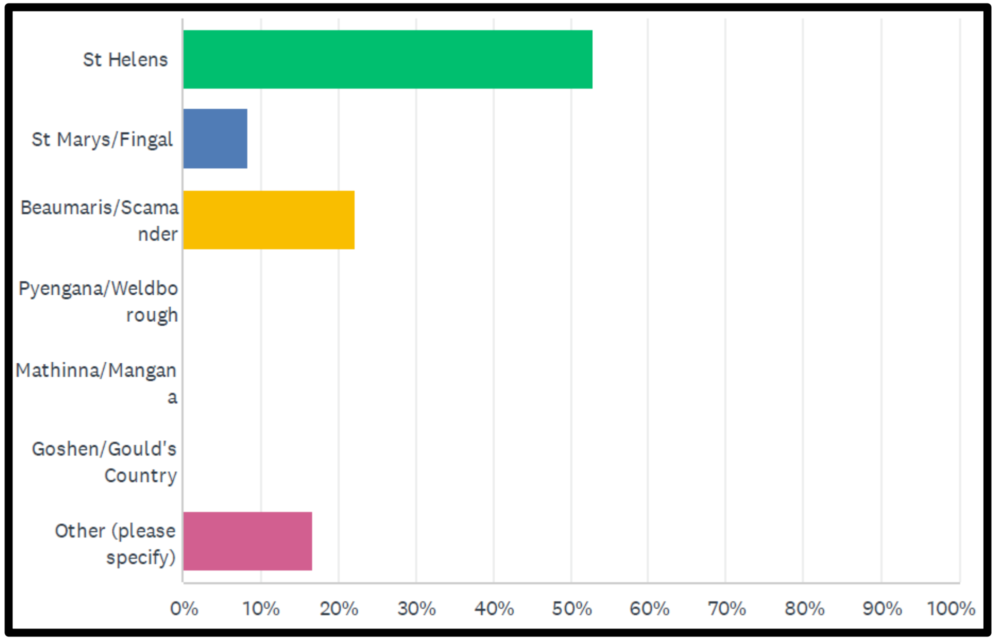
Visitor Economy

- The number of accommodation providers experiencing a decrease in occupancy rate has increased by 14% when compared to previous survey.
- Visitors appear to be staying longer:
  - 29% of accommodation provider's experience, on average, 3 night stays. This was substantially more than the previous survey (3 night stays were 0% in Summer 2021 and 8% in Summer 2020).

- 57% of accommodation provider's experience, on average, 2 night stays. This was 15% more than the Summer 2021 survey and 20% more than Summer 2020 results.
- 1 night stays have decreased (by 25%)

Types of Business

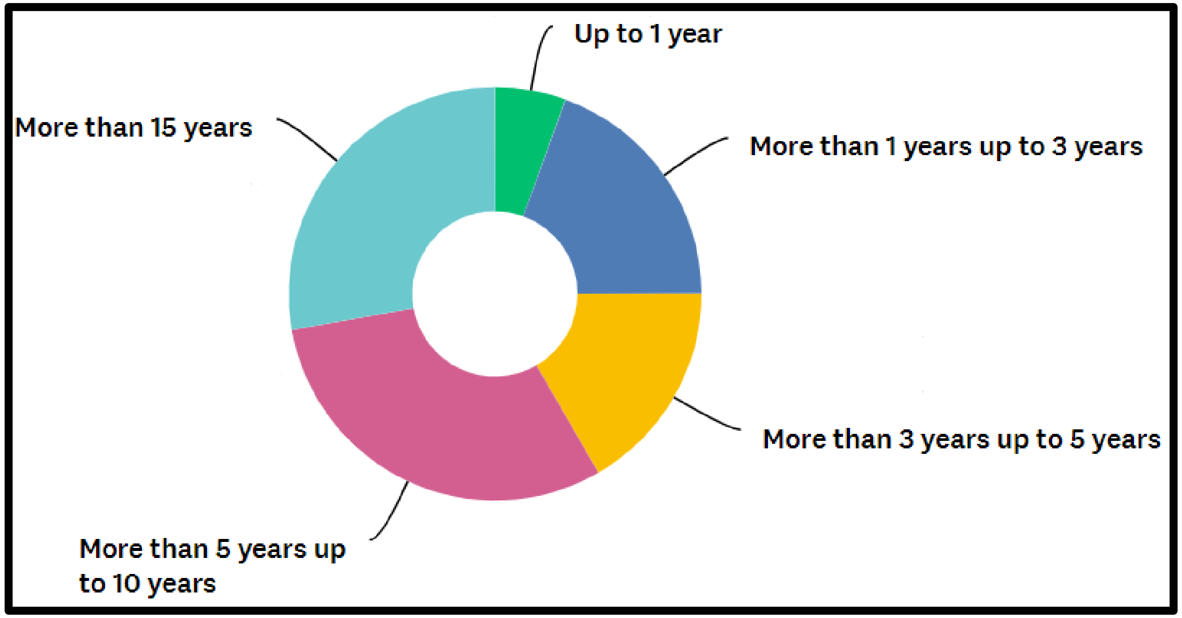
Q3 – Town where your business is located



St Helens	53%
St Marys/Fingal	8%
Beaumaris/Scamander	22%
Akaroa	3%
Binalong Bay	5%
Four Mile Creek	3%
Falmouth	3%
Work from Home	3%

As expected and similar to previous surveys, half respondents were businesses located in St Helens. However, this survey received almost double the responses from businesses located in Beaumaris/Scamander than the previous survey. 'Other' responses were by majority located in Binalong Bay, with representation from Four Mile Creek, Falmouth and Akaroa.

Q5 – How long has your business been in operation

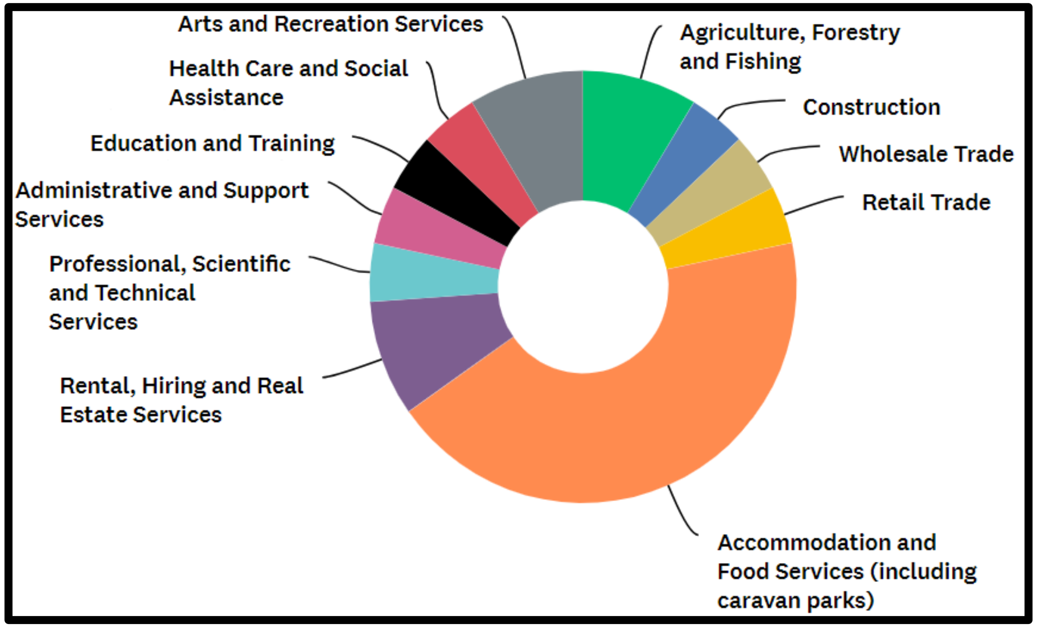


Up to 1 year	6%
More than 1 year up to 3 years	19%
More than 3 years up to 5 years	17%
More than 5 years up to 10 years	31%
More than 15 years	28%
Not yet in operation	0%
No longer in operation	0%

Just over half respondents have been in operation for more than 5 years. A total of 43% of respondents were less than 5 years in operation demonstrating positive growth of new businesses in the area.

- Majority of these 'younger' businesses were located in St Helens (70%) whilst both Beaumaris/Scamander and St Marys/Fingal had representation.
- Interestingly, there was strong representation (30%) from Beaumaris/Scamander for business 5 years or over.

Q24 – What industry is your business considered in?



Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	9%
Construction	4%
Wholesale Trade	4%
Retail Trade	4%
Accommodation and Food Services (including caravan parks)	44%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	9%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	4%
Administrative and Support Services	4%
Education and Training	4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	4%
Arts and Recreation Services	9%
'Other': Winery, Museum, Tourism	3%

Responses were made by businesses in a range of industries. Predominantly businesses within Accommodation and Food Services responded to the survey (45%).

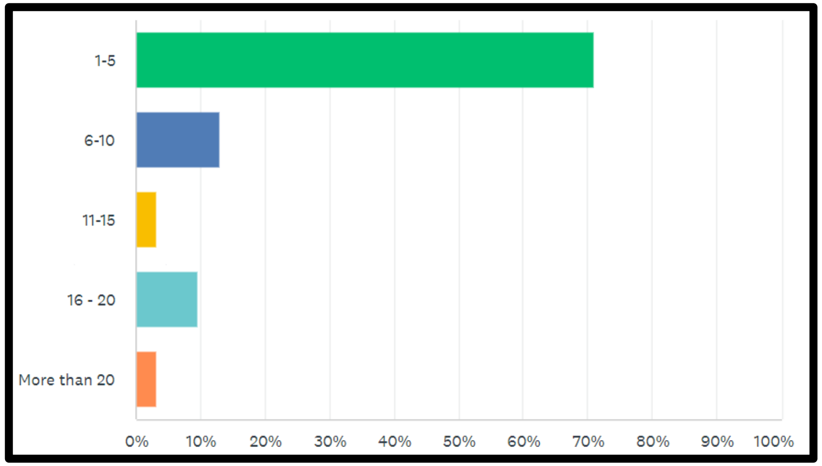
- Majority of businesses classified within the Accommodation and Food Services industry were located in St Helens (50%), Binalong Bay (20%) and Beaumaris/Scamander (20%).

It's unsurprising that this industry were nearly majority of respondents given that the target audience of the previous was to service tourism operators. It's hoped that future surveys will have better representation across all industry sections.

Jobs and Skills

Employment

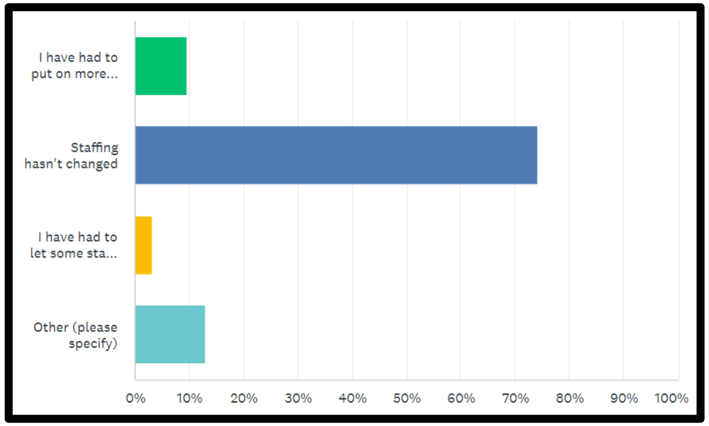
Q11 – How many people do you currently employ? (Including yourself)



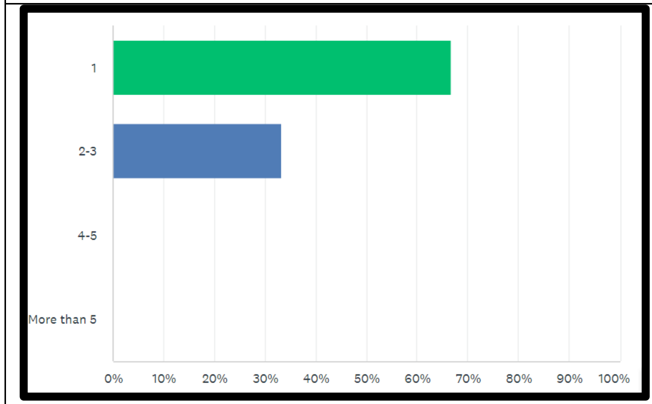
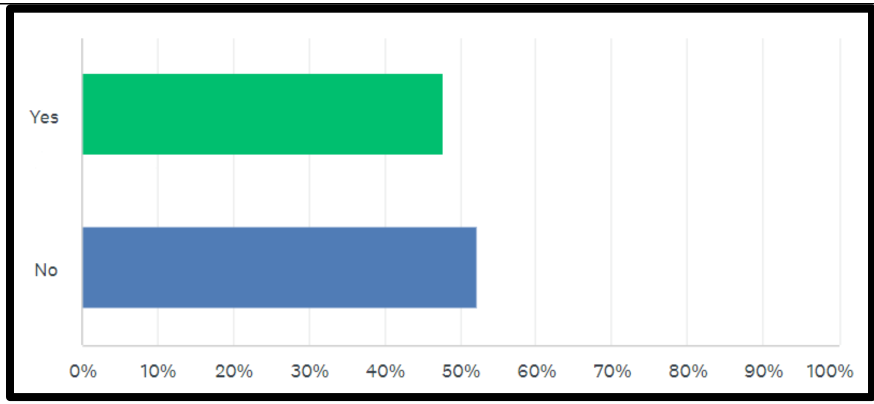
1-5 employees	71%
6-10 employees	13%
11-15 employees	3%
16-20 employees	10%
More than 20 employees	3%

Workforce Growth

Q12 – Which of the following statements best reflects your workforce over the last 3 months?



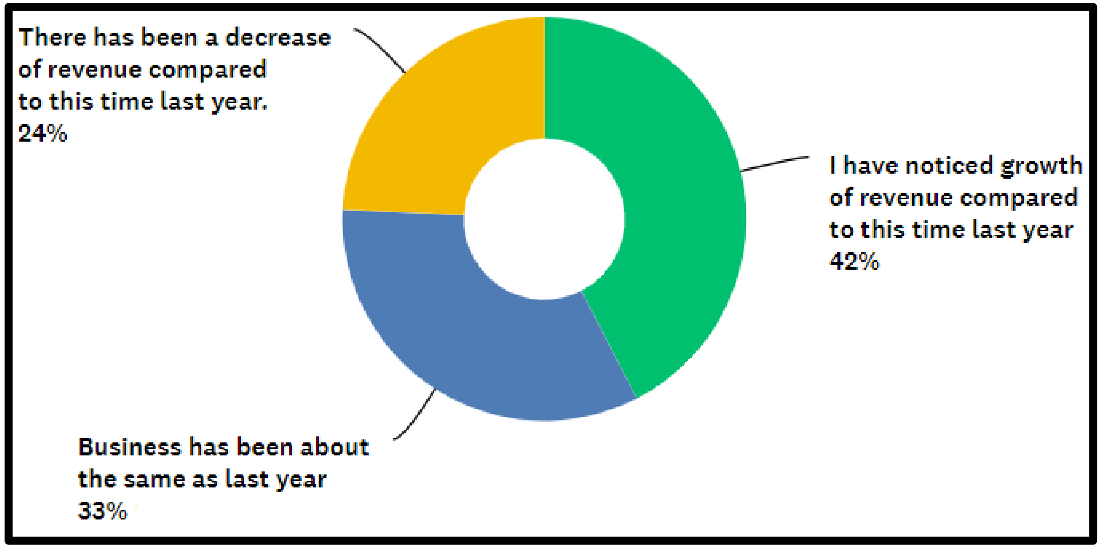
I have had to put on more staff	10%
Staffing hasn't changed	74%
I have had to let some staff go	3%
Other: *"Can't find any"* *"Staff have left due to COVID risk"* *"Always looking for staff*	12%

Q13 – How many new staff have you put on in the last 3 months?	Q15 – Do you have any plans to employ more staff in the next 12 months?
	

Market

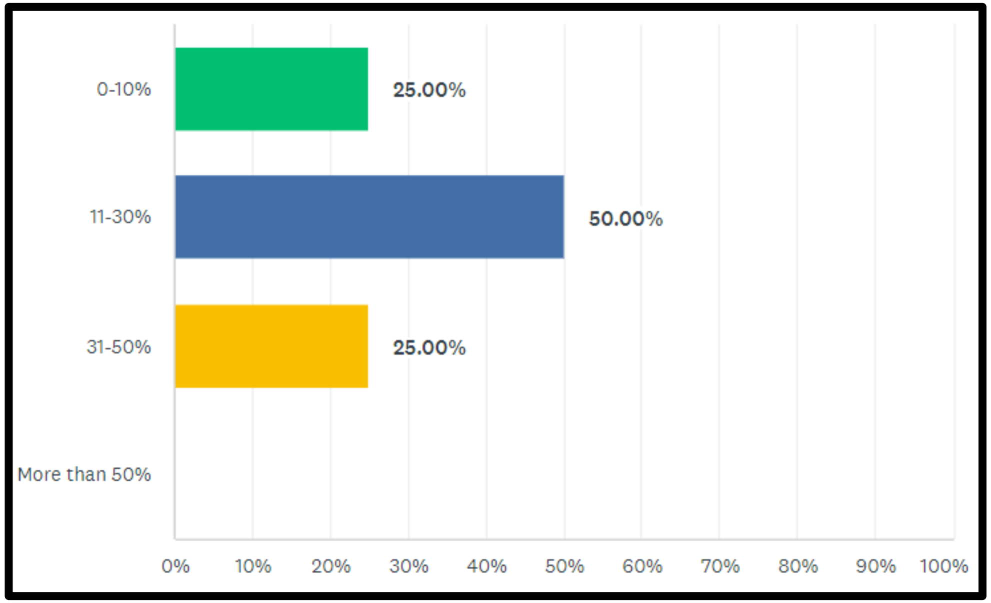
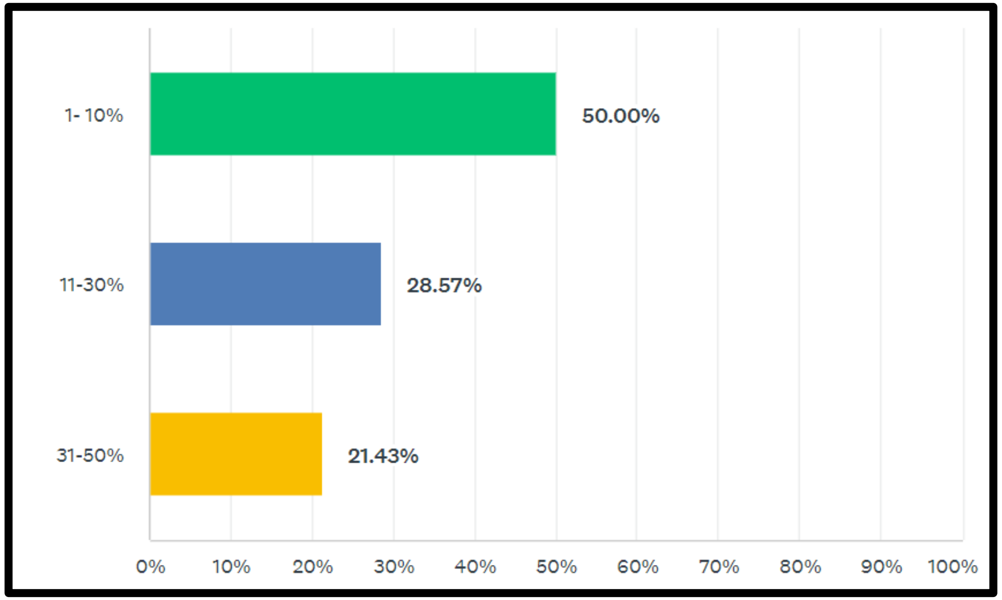
Revenue:

Q6 – Which statement best reflects your business observations over the last three months



- 46% of businesses noticed revenue growth over the last three months.
  - Of those that experienced an increase of revenue, the majority experienced 1-10% increase.
  - A significant amount (30%) of businesses that experienced an increase of revenue were within the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry.
  - Businesses that experienced an increase of 31-50% of revenue growth were within the Wholesale Trade or Construction industry.
- There has been a 10% increase of businesses who experienced a decrease of revenue.
  - Of those that experienced a decrease in revenue, the majority (50%) experienced 11-30% decrease.
  - Of those that experienced a decrease in revenue, 60% were in the Accommodation and Food services industry.
- However, there is not a clear relationship between revenue decrease and businesses within the Accommodation and Food services industry as 40% of businesses that experienced an *increase* in revenue were also within this industry.

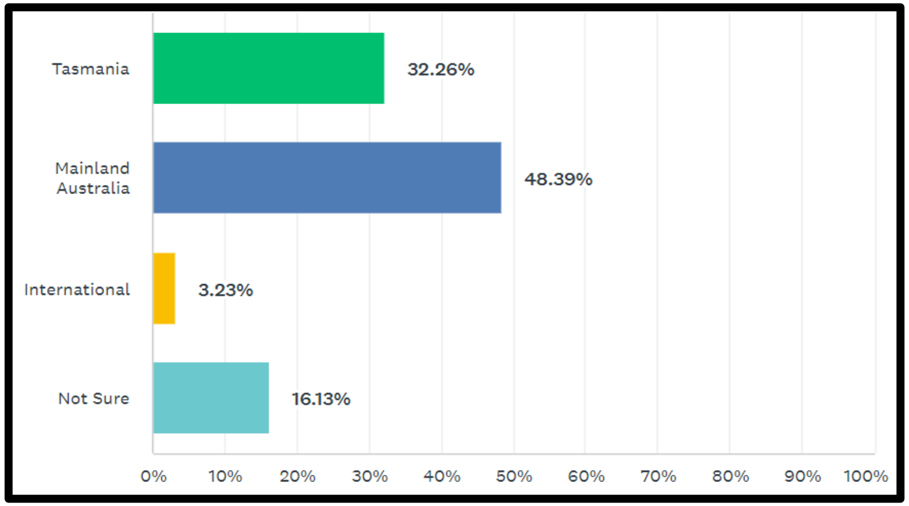
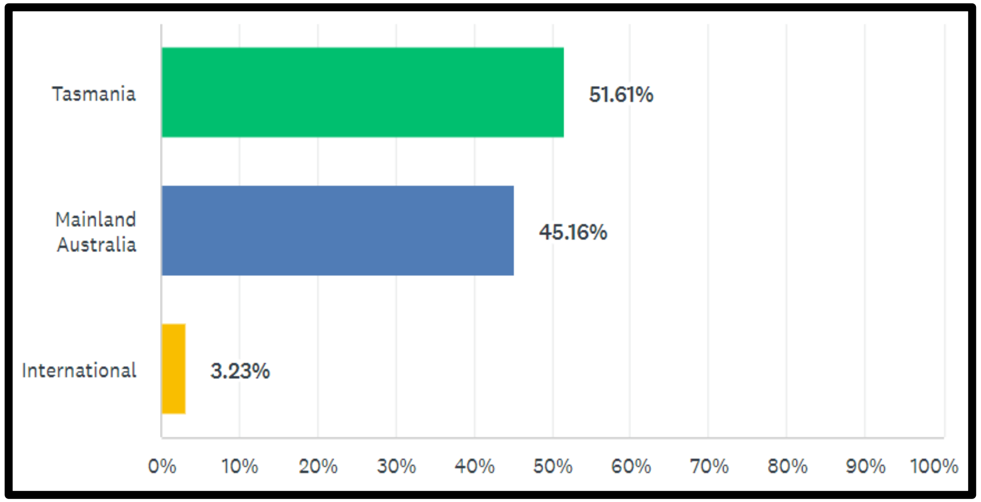
Q7 and 8 – Please indicate what you think best reflects the decrease/increase of revenue in your business

Q7: Decrease	Q8: Increase
	

The graphs above show that the majority who experienced a decrease of revenue had a greater percentage impact (11-30%) than those who experienced an increase of revenue (1-10%).

Origin of Customers

- Of the last three months, the main origin of visitors have been from mainland Australia (50%) whilst 30% of visitors are from Tasmania.
- However, this is an unusual occurrence as shown by Question 10: generally the origin of visitors are from Tasmania (50%) with 45% originating from mainland Australia.
- A potential explanation of this occurrence may be found in Question 28, which found that all Accommodation providers attributed their decrease in occupancy rates to the opening of interstate borders.

Q9: Origin of visitors from the last three months	Q10: Origin of visitors generally
	

Short Term Challenges

Q16 – What are the main challenges of doing business in the Break O'Day area (Please choose up to three)

The most identified challenges of doing business in Break O'Day centered on customers and employees.

More specifically:

1. **Attracting and maintaining customers (57%)**
2. **Recruiting and retaining good staff (52%)**
3. **Finding employee housing (39%)**

- When comparing the results of questions 16, 17, 18 and 19 the challenge of attracting and retaining both customers and staff is a common inhibitor of growth. It can be assumed that the challenge of finding employee housing limits the pool of potential employees that businesses can recruit from.

- Correspondingly, when a business finds the right employee and endeavors to relocate, the ability to find suitable housing is limited.

- Of those that ticked both the challenges of finding employee housing and recruiting and retaining good staff, half (52%) were within the Accommodation and Food Services industry.

- Other businesses identifying these challenges were within the following industries: Construction, Real Estate, Administration and Support Services, Wholesale Trade and Arts and Recreation.

- Another dominant challenge is 39% of respondents finding internet mobile coverage to be a challenge of doing business. It could be assumed that this is for both conducting business as well as providing the mechanism for customers (local and tourists) to find their business online.

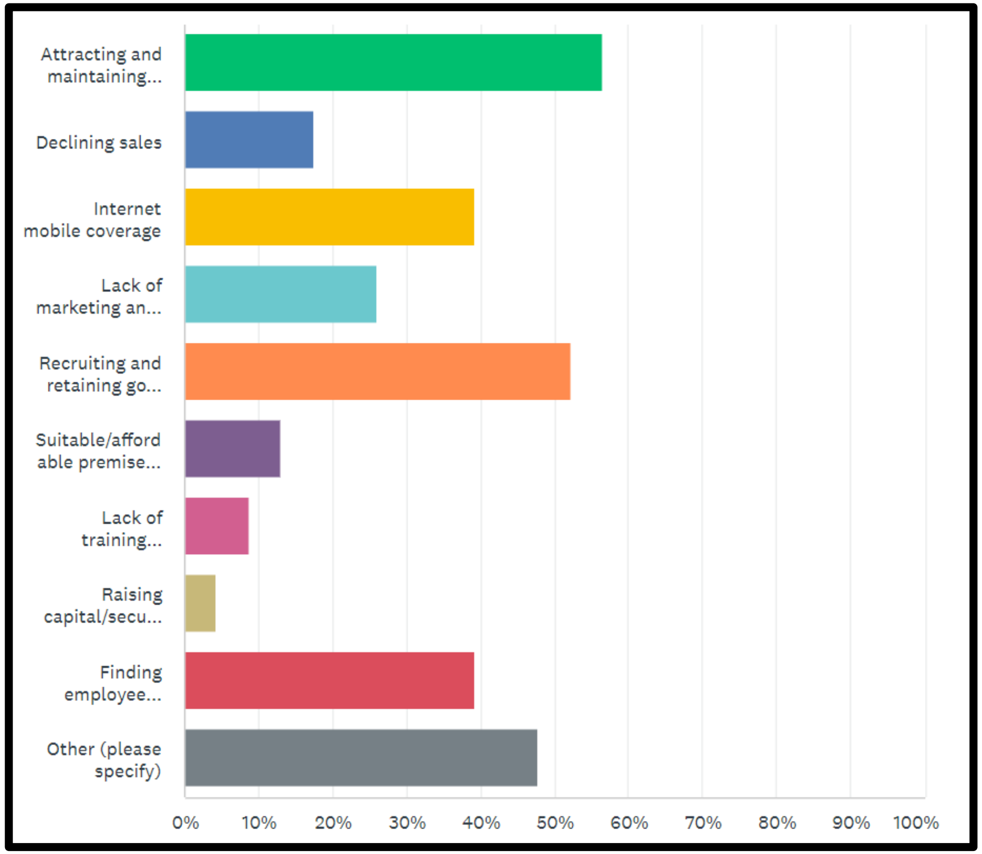
- Of the 'other' responses, there were a range of challenges presented. Regulations and increase of expenses cost were more frequent challenges when doing business in Break O'Day.

Other Responses:

"Lack of marketing of the Bay of Fires as a destination interstate"

"Reiteration of the need for suitable premises at affordable hire fees to enable me to expand my business at affordable rates for an increased range of clientele"

"Directional Signage"



Attracting and maintaining customers	57%
Declining sales	17%
Internet mobile coverage	39%
Lack of marketing and promotional opportunities	26%
Recruiting and retaining good staff	52%
Suitable/affordable premises to conduct business	13%
Lack of training opportunities	9%
Raising capital/securing business loans	4%
Finding employee housing	39%
Other	48%

Short Term Opportunities

Q17 – What do you see as the opportunities for your business over the next 12 months?

- Positively, majority of responses expected business growth based on the following variable factors:
  1. The potential return of international visitors; and
  2. Growth of interstate travel (an increase of mainland travelers to the state)
- Other responses expected growth if suitable premises were provided. In particular, suitable premises were influenced by either the lease cost or planning scheme related. Growth was also expected if product markets could be found and if expenses did not increase.
- Reduction of Airbnb numbers were referenced as an opportunity to alleviate the housing crisis.
- A few responses stated that growth opportunities were hampered by their inability to find adequate staff to service demand.

Responses:

"Further develop a consistent base-level of visitors, including through the provision of services ourselves where these cannot be reliably found in BoD."

"Business growth, hopefully. Capturing the international market will help, if visitors travel outside of Hobart."

"Expansion to production capacity"

"Re-newing interstate contract/business with wholesaler which lapsed due to COVID."

"Possibility to expand and take on more business if able to find staff."

Long Term Challenges

Q18 – What are the most significant challenges your business is likely to face over the next 12 months?

The most common responses to the questions were grouped in the following themes:

1. Increase of costs
2. Staffing – finding and recruiting
3. Skills shortages
4. Housing Crisis
5. Inconsistent tourism
6. Saturation of market
7. Signage

Challenges over the next 12 months were very similar to the current challenges found in Q16. However, Q18 presented some new challenges, including:

Inconsistent Tourism

- A challenge for businesses is the lack of consistent tourism numbers across the year which creates fluctuations in their revenue.
- This presented as a challenge particularly for staffing: when to hire and train staff has become difficult to predict.
- An interesting inclusion was the inability of some businesses to handle the summer wave of tourists, as the *'wave height is becoming significant'*.
- This theme also related to the challenge of state/international borders opening creating inconsistent flows of tourism that was not necessarily experienced when borders were closed.

Saturation of Accommodation Market

- Mentioned by accommodation providers is the challenge of increased competition due to an increase of providers.

Less common but important challenges presented were issues with supply shortages, unpredictable weather conditions and inability to find markets locally and online.

Long Term Opportunities

Q19 – What do you believe are the business or economic opportunities Break O'Day Council could focus on over the 5 years?

The responses were grouped together to form themes. The main themes presented were:

1. **Events/Festivals**
2. **Supporting and Promoting local business**
3. **Tourism**
4. **Regulation Removal**
5. **Infrastructure and facility provision**

Events/Festivals

- The most frequent response surrounded the opportunity presented by a consistent events/festivals calendar for the year. Giving people a 'reason' to come to the area that may be associated with but extends beyond mountain biking is a clear opportunity businesses identified. This suggestion may offset the challenge presented in Q18 of inconsistent tourism.

- This aligned with responses to previous questions that advocated for winter events/campaigns to ensure visitors in the off-peak season.

- Investigation of opportunities that are 'outside the square' were suggested, this included the use of the marina and Georges Bay as well as a dedicated farmers market located at St Helens wharf. The success of Dark MOFO, Huon Valley Winter Festival and Bicheno Beams demonstrate the interest and demand for winter events.

- It was advocated that focus and support for events/tourism promotion outside of St Helens and Binalong Bay are required. A doubling of respondents based in Scamander/Beaumaris (compared to last survey) demonstrates the high level of engagement businesses located outside of St Helens.

- Responses to Question 21 offered Scamander River banks (both sides) as locations to be further developed and may offer opportunities that extend beyond the St Helens Township. St Mary's market and ad hoc markets in Scamander market continue to gain popularity and positive reputation.

Supporting and Promoting Local Business

- Continued support and promotion of local businesses was a frequent response for Break O'Day Council to focus on over the next 5 years. Responses ranged from Council continuing to use local suppliers and contractors to addressing signage issues in order to better promote local business.
- Importantly this response was, by majority, from businesses who do not rely on tourists as their customer base.
- It should be noted, however, that the flow on effect of tourism (job generation, infrastructure provision etc) indirectly impacts businesses in the Break O'Day region even though they do not rely on tourists as their customer base.

Tourism

Categorised within this theme were focuses on:

1. Attracting visitors to the area,
2. Enhancing their experiences, and
3. Supporting and encouraging diverse tourism offerings.

There is a clear relationship between Tourism and Events/Festivals. Improving visitor **and** community experience is an area that businesses would like BODC to focus on.

Regulation Removal

Removal of regulation in order to achieve a variety of desires including, planning scheme modification, addressing the housing crisis and compliance restricting development.

Infrastructure and Facility Provision

Improved infrastructure including maintaining roads, sealing roads to improve access to areas for community benefit and tourism opportunities were presented. The St Helens foreshore plan, improvement of events space and development/improvement of areas (such as the Scamander River banks) were also mentioned.

Recommendation

Response

It's clear that the region's businesses desire consistent events across the year. Such a calendar presents opportunities for both community and visitor engagement. Council officers will discuss with the regional tourism organisation (East Coast Tasmania Tourism) as to how we may address this opportunity.

As noted in a submitted response, this effort cannot be left up to governing bodies (and survey responses have not requested this). Community driven events are far more successful with the support of local government, rather than necessarily local government being the initiator. From this viewpoint, it appears that it's required of Council to:

1. Promote and encourage events within the area
2. Offer in-house support for events that align with community values
3. Continue collaboration with East Coast Tourism Tasmania including passing on business feedback and experiences. Work together in investigating and identifying opportunities for events particularly in winter/off-season.

In regards to regulation removal, the responses relating to the Planning Scheme require more investigation. Some suggestions were feasible (e.g. signage) versus other suggestions that called for Planning Scheme amendments. Each response will be assessed, followed-up (if required or requested) and referred to the Planning Department when applicable.

Government Assistance and Council support

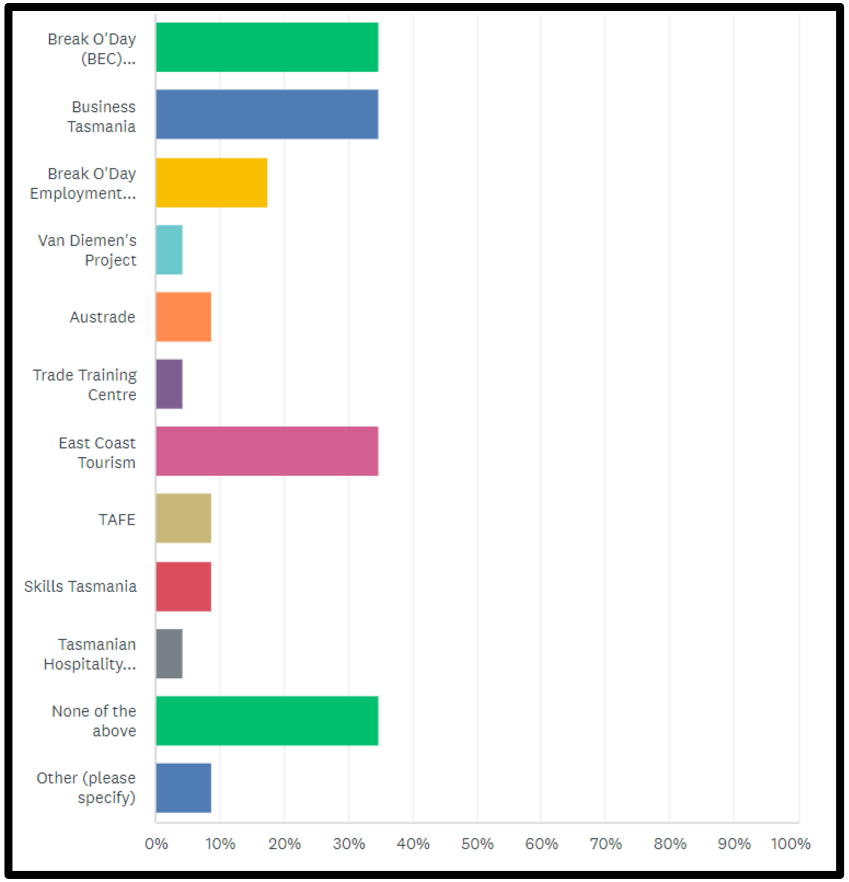
Q20 – Have any Break O'Day Council or Government policies (or procedures) adversely affected your decision to develop new business initiatives? If yes, please explain.

- 80% of respondents have not found either BODC or Government policies to adversely affect their decision to develop new business initiatives.
- Of those that have been affected, half were in relation to the planning scheme/development services.
- This included matters relating to restrictions surrounding diverse visitor accommodation, permitted land uses in certain zones and wait times of applications.

Q21 – Do you have any suggestions or ideas as to how Break O'Day Council can better support businesses in our area?

Themed Response	Number of responses
Continue to improve infrastructure	2
Further development Scamander River bank, including improve/update signage	2
Create small business network	2
Actively market the region	1
No suggestions/everything appears to be good	2
Tell human interest stories about businesses in different industries	1
Use local providers	2
Improve communication between Council officers and businesses/community	2
Encourage more events	2
Demand improved internet and phone coverage	1
Assist new business with planning applications and/or rates levy. Explore options of making this financially easier.	5

Q22 – Have you sought assistance from any government programs or resources?



Break O'Day Enterprise Centre	35%
Business Tasmania	35%
Break O'Day Employment Connect	18%
Van Diemen's Project	4%
Austrade	9%
Trade Training Centre	1%
East Coast Tourism	35%
TAFE	9%
Skills Tasmania	9%
Tasmanian Hospitality Association	4%
None of the above	35%
Other: - TICT - St Helens DAP - State Growth - Tasport	9%

Q23 – Do you believe the business community gets value from the government programs or resources? If no, please explain.

- Nearly 50% of respondents felt that they receive value from government programs or resources
- 25% do not believe they get value. Reasons are:
    - Difficult to access/require a large amount of input
    - Bureaucratic process with difficult eligibility criteria
- 2 respondents were ‘unsure’ whilst another 2 respondents were unaware of any programs that may applicable to them.

“Possibly – but I think business needs to stand on its own two feet and not rely on Government handouts.”

“No, usually very bureaucratic and difficult to access”

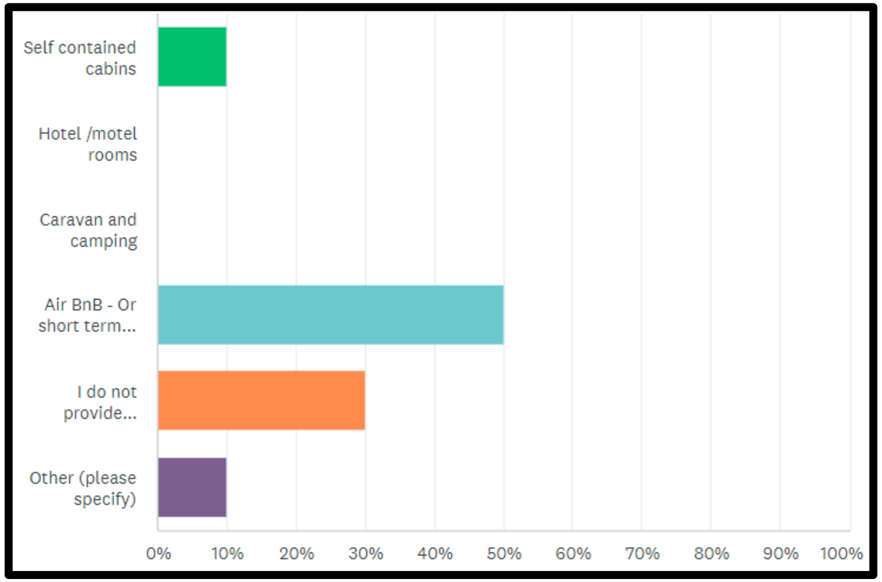
“Yes, helping to support wages is a big helping hand”

Visitor Economy

This section was only available to Accommodation and Food Service providers.

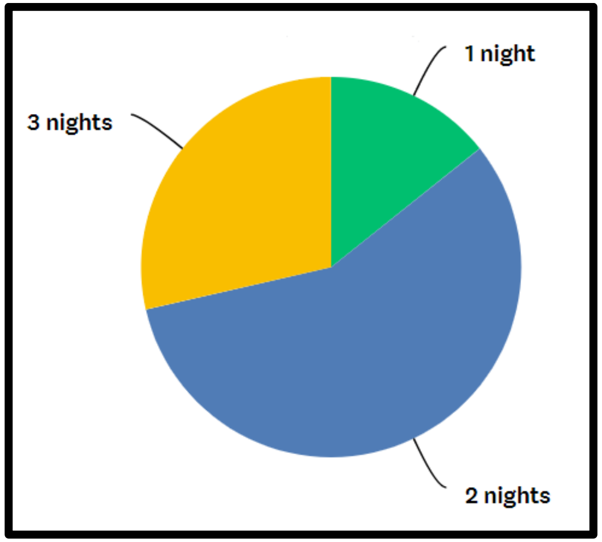
Type of Accommodation

Q25 – What type of accommodation do you provide?



Self-contained cabins	10%
Hotel/motel rooms	0%
Caravan and camping	0%
Airbnb – or short term rental	50%
I do not provide accommodation	30%
Other (hosted accommodation)	10%

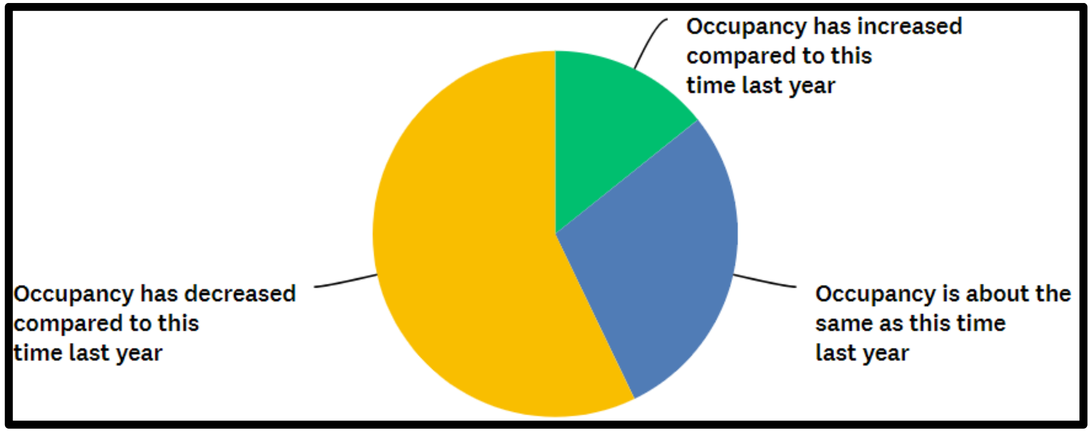
Q26 – How long on average did your visitors stay for?



1 night	14%
2 nights	57%
3 nights	29%

- The results demonstrate that visitors in the area are increasing their length of stay.
- When compared to the results within summer 2021 survey, there was an increase of 3 night stays by 29%. This demonstrates a growing trend of increase of stay within the area.
- 57% of accommodation provider's experience, on average, 2 night stays. This was 15% more than the Summer 2021 survey and 20% more than Summer 2020 results.
- 1 night stays have decreased (by 25%)

Q27 – What statement best reflects your occupancy rates over the last 3 months?



Occupancy has increased compared to this time last year	14%
Occupancy is about the same as this time last year	29%
Occupancy has decreased compared to this time last year	57%

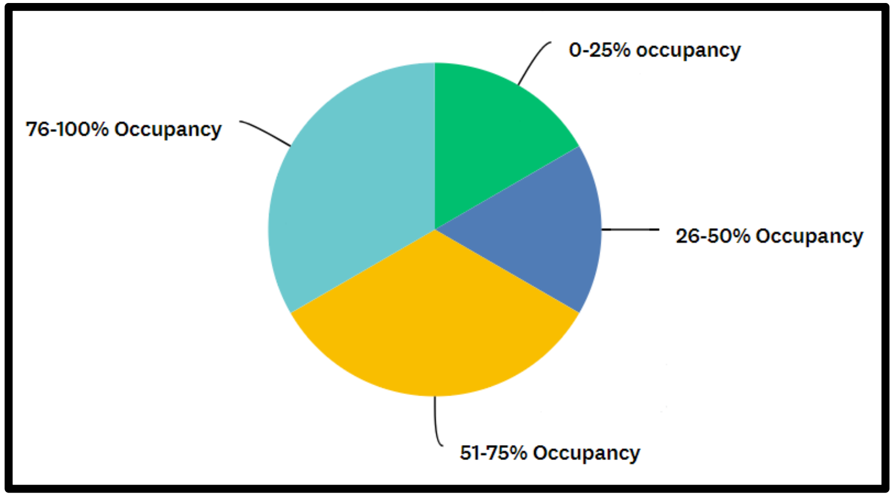
- The number of accommodation providers experiencing a decrease in occupancy rate has increased by 14% when compared to previous survey.

Cause of decrease in occupancy

Q28 – Why do you think this is?

- 75% of respondents stated that borders reopening were the reason for a decreased occupancy rate.
- Other responses included impact of COVID and inability for tourists to hire vehicles, especially when the Spirit of Tasmania is at capacity.
- *"Visitors generally (sometimes including Tasmanians) are unaware of the diversity and depth of experiences available in BOD… and learn of these after they arrive and are unable to extend their stay"*

Q29 – What best reflects your average occupancy during this time?



0-25% occupancy	17%
26-50% occupancy	17%
51-75% occupancy	33%
76-100% occupancy	33%

Appendix

BODC Biennial Business Survey

A bit of info about you goes a long way!

Any information that you share with us is confidential. We will be using the information you provide us in this survey to help us understand our businesses, their needs and expectations so we can better help them. We will also use this data to inform our decisions around infrastructure, marketing of the trails etc. We will provide a report on this data (removing all individual identifiable elements) which we can email out to you. We are also happy to send you your individual businesses data for your own use if you would like.

* 1. Business Name:

* 2. Position of person completing the survey:

* 3. Town where your business is located

- St Helens
- St Marys/Fingal
- Beaumaris/Scamander
- Pyengana/Weldborough
- Mathinna/Mangana
- Goshen/Gould's Country
- Other (please specify)

4. What is your best email address so we can add you to our business database.

5. How long has your business been in operation?

- Up to 1 year
- More than 1 years up to 3 years
- More than 3 years up to 5 years
- More than 5 years up to 10 years
- More than 15 years
- Not yet in operation
- No longer in operation

BODC Biennial Business Survey

General Operation Questions

* 6. Which statement best reflects your business observations over the last three months...

- ◯ I have noticed growth of revenue compared to this time last year
- ◯ Business has been about the same as last year
- ◯ There has been a decrease of revenue compared to this time last year.

BODC Biennial Business Survey

7. Please indicate what you think best reflects the decrease of revenue in your business.

- ◯ 0-10%
- ◯ 11-30%
- ◯ 31-50%
- ◯ More than 50%

BODC Biennial Business Survey

* 8. Using the following options, please indicate what you think best reflects the amount of growth of revenue in your business.

- 1- 10%
- 11-30%
- 31-50%
- More than 50%

BODC Biennial Business Survey

* 9. What is the main origin of your extra visitors from the last three months?

- Tasmania
- Mainland Australia
- International
- Not Sure

* 10. What is the origin of your visitors generally?

- Tasmania
- Mainland Australia
- International

* 11. How many people do you currently employ? (Including yourself)

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16 - 20
- More than 20

* 12. Which of the following statements best reflects your workforce over the last 3 months?

- I have had to put on more staff
- Staffing hasn't changed
- I have had to let some staff go
- Other (please specify)

BODC Biennial Business Survey

* 13. How many new staff have you put on in the last 3 months?

- 1
- 2-3
- 4-5
- More than 5

* 14. What would be the Full time Equivalent of these new positions?

* 15. Do you have any plans to employ more staff in the next 12 months?

- Yes
- No

* 16. What are the main challenges of doing business in the Break O'Day area? (Please choose up to three)

- Attracting and maintaining customers
- Declining sales
- Internet mobile coverage
- Lack of marketing and promotional opportunities
- Recruiting and retaining good staff
- Other (please specify)
- Suitable/affordable premises to conduct business
- Lack of training opportunities
- Raising capital/securing business loans
- Finding employee housing

* 17. What do you see as the opportunities for your business over the next 12 months?

* 18. What are the most significant challenges your business is likely to face over the next 12 months?

* 19. What do you believe are the business or economic opportunities Break O'Day Council could focus on over the next 5 years?

20. Have any Break O'Day Council or Government policies (or procedures) adversely affected your decision to develop new business initiatives? If Yes Please explain.

21. Do you have any suggestions or ideas as to how Break O'Day Council can better support businesses in our area?

* 22. Have you sought assistance from any government programs or resources?

- [ ] Break O'Day (BEC) Enterprise Centre
- [ ] Business Tasmania
- [ ] Break O'Day Employment Connect (BODEC)
- [ ] Van Diemen's Project
- [ ] Austrade
- [ ] Trade Training Centre
- [ ] East Coast Tourism
- [ ] TAFE
- [ ] Skills Tasmania
- [ ] Tasmanian Hospitality Association
- [ ] None of the above
- [ ] Other (please specify)

* 23. Do you believe the business community gets value from government programs or resources? If No, Please explain?

* 24. What industry is your business considered in?

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Mining
- Manufacturing
- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
- Construction
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade
- Accommodation and Food Services (including caravan parks)
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- Information Media and Telecommunications
- Financial and Insurance Services
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- Administrative and Support Services
- Public Administration and Safety
- Education and Training
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Arts and Recreation Services

Other (please specify)

BODC Biennial Business Survey

Accommodation Businesses

These questions have been specifically designed for accommodation businesses in the Break O'Day area. The aim of these questions is to provide us with a picture of how business in this area has changed and allow us to compare this data seasonally and annually.

We appreciate you taking the time to help us with this.

* 25. What type of accommodation do you provide?

- Self contained cabins
- Hotel /motel rooms
- Caravan and camping
- Other (please specify)
- Air BnB - Or short term rental
- I do not provide accommodation

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* 26. How long on average did your visitors stay for?

- ◯ 1 night
- ◯ 2 nights
- ◯ 3 nights
- ◯ 4 nights
- ◯ A week or longer

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* 27. What statement best reflects your occupancy rates over the last 3 months?

- ◯ Occupancy has increased compared to this time last year
- ◯ Occupancy is about the same as this time last year
- ◯ Occupancy has decreased compared to this time last year

Break O'Day COUNCIL

BODC Biennial Business Survey

* 28. Why do you think this is?

* 29. What best reflects your average occupancy during this time?

- ◯ 0-25% occupancy
- ◯ 26-50% Occupancy
- ◯ 51-75% Occupancy
- ◯ 76-100% Occupancy

BODC Biennial Business Survey

Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey! Before you go ...

30. Is there anything you would like to add?