

## **Planning assessment Committee**

Ann Luke, President of Gunnedah and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry inc.

Been associated with Chamber since I first commenced in business in Gunnedah 20 years ago

Has always been a quandary or difficulty with associations or any organisation with elected officials providing their own view or undertaking a process to ensure representation of the views of its members.

Further difficulties can arise when other parties presume chamber of commerce is representative of the wider business community.

The chamber committee determined in March this year to undertake a survey of the business community – both members and non-members. We engaged a consultant to do this survey.

WE asked two questions -

## **Coal Mining Impacts**

1. Coal mining of the Gunnedah basin is forecast to increase over the next few decades. Are you expecting the growth to have a neutral, positive or negative impact on the turnover and profitability of your business?
2. In the context of living and working in Gunnedah - (considering wider social and environmental as well as economic factors) Are you in favour of the increased coal mining that is anticipated

It was by the very nature of our town a small sample size.

The results although not analysed statistically I believe were significant - 75% believed that business would increase as a result of coal mining

68% were in favour of the anticipated coal mining, considering the wider social and economic factors.

As a woman who was brought up in the city, never visiting the country and with no country cousins. I cherish the community that I live – its size and sense of community and sense of place.

Gunnedah has been a strong commercial entity, providing a range of goods and services for the mainly agricultural industry with which most people were connected.

Pressures for many years have been changing the town, the days of three whitegoods sellers, 5 -6 dress shops and 4 pharmacies and a department store are a thing of the past –

These pressures have been brought about by the increasing size of landholdings, agricultural corporatisation, increasing average age of farmers, better roads and transport to name a few.

Things have been changing for a long time. Gunnedah's population during the 90's and first few years of this millennium was shrinking. Fewer teachers, few kids in schools, less services offered, fewer shops, decreased variety.

Mining in a region tends to reverse a population decline. But it does put a different mix to the population base, but things were changing anyway.

It is imperative that the farming businesses in our region and the associated local agricultural resources and caretakers and operators are looked after, that mining is undertaken in a responsible manner and does not come at the expense of our environment or the social fabric of our community.



# Gunnedah Chamber of Commerce Survey of Business

May 2014

Essential Solutions Consulting

# Analysis of Survey Questions

## Introduction

In the second and third of week of May two separate business groups were surveyed in Gunnedah with the intent of establishing business opinions on two topical matters.

A group of 15 non-chamber businesses was surveyed and 25 financial members of the chamber were also asked the same set of questions. Responses have been provided by both groups in separate analysis. In addition a collective response has been provided.

A list of some of the respondents has been collated and can be provided demonstrating the mix of businesses surveyed.

## Methodology

The survey was conducted by way of phone interview with respondents randomly selected from two databases provided by the Chamber. The survey respondents were informed the survey was anonymous and would only be provided in a collective form in an endeavour to elicit reflective and accurate responses to the matters raised

The Survey was conducted by an independent team with the communication done by someone without intimate knowledge of the community or strong views in relation to the matters raised in an endeavour to ensure an unbiased collation of response data.

## Survey Questions

### Visitors Information Centre

1. Do you feel that the location of the visitors centre (current or proposed future) has any impact on your business
2. Do you think a change of location of the Visitors Information Centre could provide positive benefits for Visitors/ Tourism activity?
3. With respect to Council's financial support of tourism industry in Gunnedah through provision of infrastructure and staff, do you feel the Council spend should be reduced, maintained or increased?

### Coal Mining Impacts

4. Coal mining of the Gunnedah basin is forecast to increase over the next few decades. Are you expecting the growth to have a neutral, positive or negative impact on the turnover and profitability of your business?
5. In the context of living and working in Gunnedah - (considering wider social and environmental as well as economic factors) Are you in favour of the increased coal mining that is anticipated

## Survey response Issues

The response rate was a deal lower than we had hoped, due mainly to some business owners absences at the time of the survey, and many expressing they were too busy to respond. Some business also noted they were unable to offer responses to the questions posed.

# Questions and Responses

## Visitors Information Centre

1. Do you feel that the location of the Visitors Information Centre (VIC) (current or proposed future) has any impact on your business?

### Members Responses

92 % or 23 member responses said the VIC positioning has no impact on their business

4% or 1 member respondent said it did and 1 was unsure

### Non Member responses

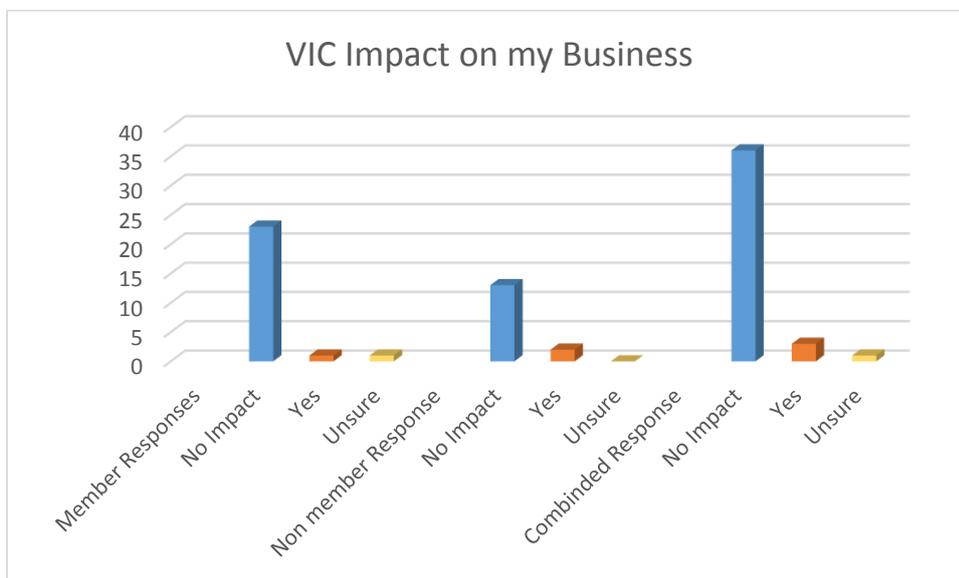
87% or 13 respondents said the VIC positioning has no impact on their business

13 % or 2 respondents said it did have an impact

### Combined Responses

90% or 36 respondents indicated the VIC positioning has no impact on their business

7.5% or 3 respondents indicated it did have an impact and 1 was unsure



2. Do you think a change of location of the Visitors Information Centre could provide positive benefits for Visitors/ Tourism activity?

**Members Responses**

40 % or 10 members responses said changing the VIC positioning would have a positive impact

48% or 12 members said a move would not provide positive impacts and 12% or 3 were uncertain about potential benefits

**Non Member responses**

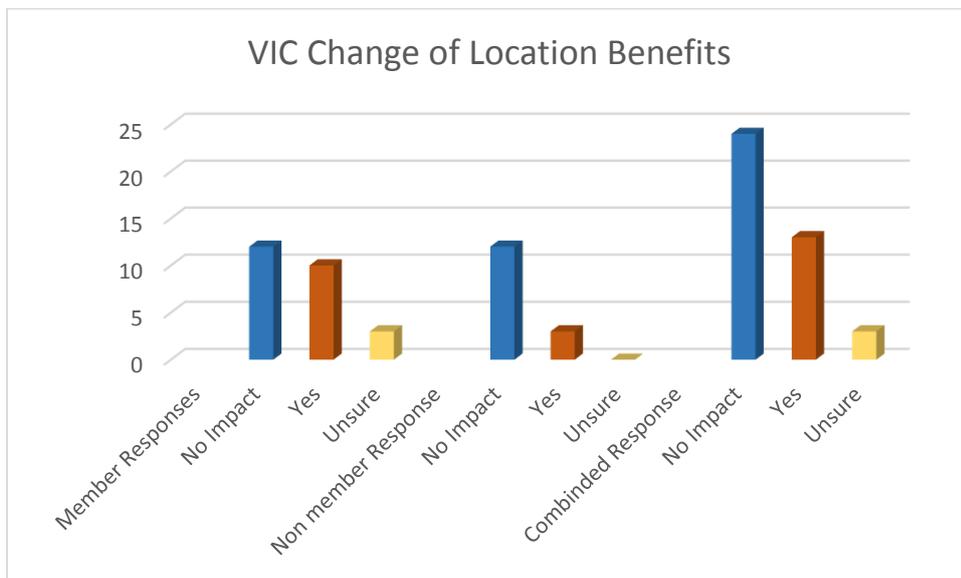
20 % or 3 responses said it could have a positive impact

80% or 12 responses said changing the VIC positioning would not have a positive impact

**Combined Response**

32.5 % or 13 respondents said changing the VIC positioning would have a positive impact

60 % or 24 respondents said a move would not provide positive impacts and 7.5 % or 3 were uncertain about potential benefits



3. With respect to Council's financial support of tourism industry in Gunnedah through provision of infrastructure and staff, do you feel the Council spend should be reduced, maintained or increased?

**Members Responses**

52 % or 13 members wanted to see existing funding levels maintained

8 % or 2 members wanted to see a reduction in funding

20 % or 5 members wanted to see an increase and 20% or 5 were unsure

**Non Member responses**

47 % or 7 respondents wanted to see existing funding levels maintained

7 % or 1 respondent wanted to see a reduction in funding

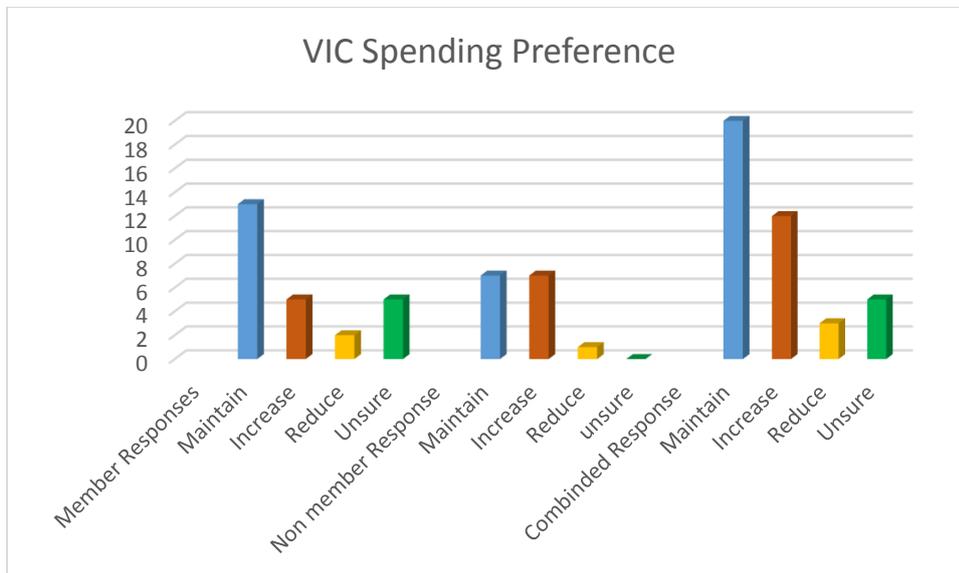
47 % or 7 respondents wanted to see an increase

**Combined Responses**

50 % or 20 respondents wanted to see existing funding levels maintained

7.5 % or 3 respondents wanted to see a reduction in funding

30 % or 12 respondents wanted to see an increase and 12.5 % or 5 were unsure



## Coal Mining Impacts

- Coal mining of the Gunnedah basin is forecast to increase over the next few decades. Are you expecting the growth to have a neutral, positive or negative impact on the turnover and profitability of your business?

### Members Responses

12 % or 3 member responses said that the projected increase in mining activity would have a negative impact on their business

68% or 18 member responses said it would have a positive impact and 16% or 4 members took a neutral position

### Non Member responses

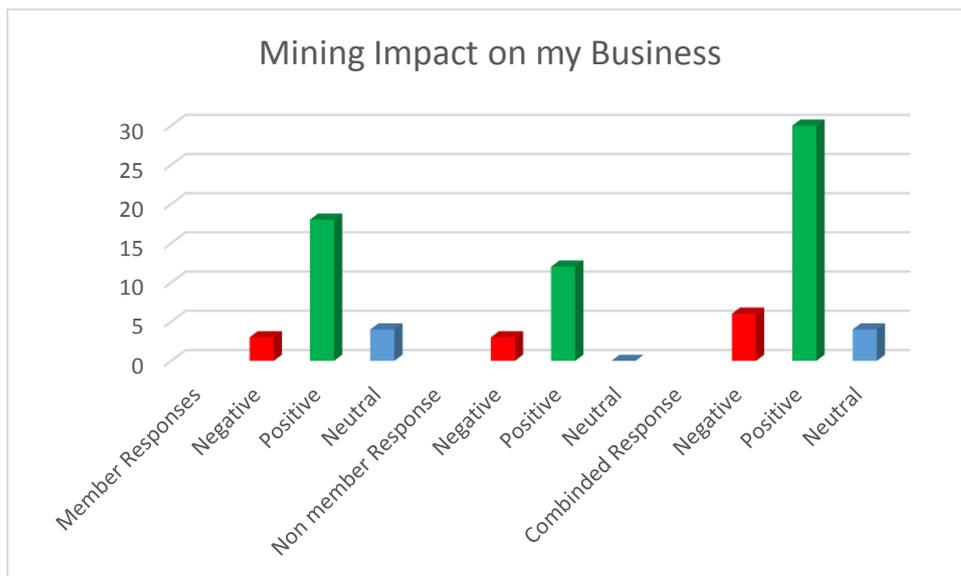
20 % or 3 respondents said that the projected increase in mining activity would have a negative impact on their business

80% or 12 respondents said it would have a positive impact

### Combined Responses

15 % or 6 responses said that the projected increase in mining activity would have a negative impact on their business

75 % or 30 respondents said it would have a positive impact and 10 % or 4 members took a neutral position



5. In the context of living and working in Gunnedah - (considering wider social and environmental as well as economic factors) Are you in favour of the increased coal mining that is anticipated

**Members Responses**

64 % or 16 member responses were in support of increased mining activity in the region

32 % or 8 member respondents said they did not in favour of increased mining in the region and 4% or 1 respondent was not sure.

**Non Member responses**

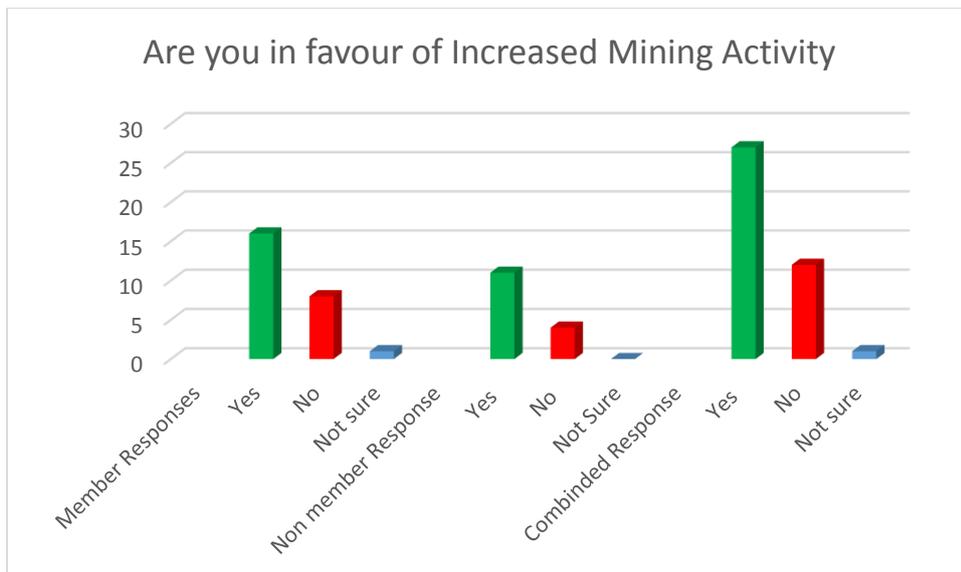
73.4 % or 11 responses were in support of increased mining activity in the region

26.6 % or 4 respondents said they did not in favour of increased mining in the region

**Combined Responses**

67.5 % or 27 responses were in support of increased mining activity in the region

30 % or 12 respondents said they did not in favour of increased mining in the region and 2.5 % or 1 respondent was not sure.



## List of Business Respondents

Some of the businesses that did provide responses to the survey Questions.

Gunnedah Leather Processors	Gunnedah Gas Centre
Lakeford Real Estate	Joe Perkins Building
Gunnedah Radiators & Intercoolers	Alan Syphers Fencing
Gunnedah Pet Vet	Old Bank Gallery
Namoi Valley Bricks	Paul Brett Services
Peel valley group	Mornington Butchery
Courthouse hotel	Market Fresh 2 U
Archery Addiction	Gunnedah Trade Waste
Wayne Bluck - Germane House	Forest Nursery
Enchanted Events	Furniture one
Pegasus	George Avar Rural property Sales
Middlebrook Air	Brad Mcivor A/C
Mammen Electrical	BTS Blinds and Awnings
Taylor Automotive	Karen Carter's Pharmacy
Community Gallery Work of Art	
Gunnedah Diesel Service	

## Non Response Reasoning

Too Busy	8
Will ring back when I have time	5
Answering Machine	8
The owner isn't in or is on holidays	4
Cannot participate	7
Just not interested	4
Called back twice or more (10 responded)	24