

Attachment B

Direct Feedback - Bushfire Impact Review

This attachment supports the
DSNSW Bushfire Support Advocacy paper.

The recent bushfires across the region have had instant and direct impact on the visitor economy. In mid-January, Destination Southern NSW undertook phone and face to face discussions with several businesses to get a realistic overview of revenue, employment and infrastructure impact to businesses in our region.

Common Themes

- Tourist leave zones resulted in immediate impact on revenue and visitor numbers.
- Ongoing bookings for accommodation providers are continuing to be slow. Cancellations continue.
- Massive reduction in casual staff hours.
- Major fresh stock loss for food outlets who were preparing for a busy summer period. Suppliers also impacted.
- Some accommodation providers are able to fill vacant rooms with emergency service and agency staff but their spending habits do not extend to retail shops.
- Road closures, smoke haze and drought have all compounded the impact of the bushfires.

Business	Postcode	Revenue Impact	Employment Impact	Other
Accommodation. cabins, caravans and camping.	2628	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No visitors for 21 days. February is traditionally slow but they have very few bookings for Feb and nothing after March. • Would expect income of around \$20,000 for Jan, this year it was \$600. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family run so no staff layoffs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Park closures impact them as visitors must have things to do. If there are no attractions people will not stay for more nights. • By coincidence the park is up for sale. Now it is difficult to justify the asking price.
Retail Store – Outdoor Gear	2630	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer base is tourists not locals. Dramatic impact. Revenue at this time of year usually \$80,000, struggled to get \$5,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laid off all staff (2x casual) and is running business by himself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things have to improve quickly, January is the busiest time of year. Will struggle to make the business survive.
Tourist Activity	2618	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This January revenue of \$1000 (not including Australia Day long weekend). This is down tens of thousands of expectations for the month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family run so little direct employment impact on other staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They did not suffer fire damage but are located within one of the tourist leave zones. • Were told by the RFS that no resources could be spared for their property if fire approached.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually would have 100 – 150 people per day. First week of January received 3. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selwyn damage may impact them with loss of family market.
Accommodation. cabins, caravans and camping.	2618	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually fully booked for Christmas and New Year period. They were in tourist leave zone so everyone had to leave. • Ongoing cancellations as fire persists in the region • Short term still very low bookings. For Australia Day weekend they would expect cabins fully booked but only 15 of 45. Have spots for 300 campers, not sure if this will fill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No shifts for casual staff. Other staff have taken holidays as there is no work at the holiday park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They suffered no fire damage so there is nothing physical to clean up but still have ongoing cancellations. • Generally optimistic that things will pick up again as they were unaffected. • Large customer base is South Coast residents. Unsure that they will come this year due to South Coast fires.
Accommodation. Motel	2633	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little impact. As one of the only accommodation providers in the region they house Victorian and NSW fire and emergency services staff. This is their usual summer season customer base. • • Fully booked and extra revenue from take away meals and on site dining. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No staff lay offs. Have been very busy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They expect that the next 12 months will see a decline in tourist numbers. Main market are fishers / hunters and motorbike groups. With damage to forests, ash in rivers expecting this market to postpone travel. • Some motorbike groups (Syd / Cbr) may postpone due to conditions of the road.
Accommodation. Motel	2632	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have been very busy. Market usually 80% workers (forestry, roads etc) so not impacted so much by loss of tourists. • • Fully booked by RFS and emergency services. • Had a few cancellations but rooms were taken by emergency services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No staff lay offs. Have been very busy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paperwork for RFS very time consuming. • Don't expect too much of a long-term impact.
Accommodation. Farm stay.	2630	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They cancelled all January bookings. Still fires in the area so they are not pushing for reservations. However the usual trend of people booking for Feb and March is not happening. They do not have any bookings for that time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family run so no staff lay offs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter is traditionally their busiest time of year so although Jan has been bad, they are optimistic that they will be fine.

Accommodation. Motel	2626	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Down at least 70% of expected revenue. Tourists are 80% of market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Casual staff have reduced hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing cancellations but optimistic that things will pick up (she said this everyone in the pub received an emergency SMS from RFS for an active fire flaring up).
Accommodation. Hotel	2627	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Should be fully booked for Jan and Feb. In the tourist leave zone so had no bookings. ● For the upcoming long weekend 9/15 rooms booked, this would usually be 15/15. ● Still losing March bookings with cancellations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have laid off casual staff. Owners are working full time but not getting paid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Owners working for free but see this as short term. Generally optimistic as know that winter bookings will see them through.
Coffee Shop	2628	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Down 20% of revenue. Fortunately have strong local customer base so can manage this drop in revenue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Owners took holiday so did not have to reduce staff hours. They need loyal staff as want to retain them during winter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Optimistic as not as hard hit as the South Coast. Looking to “adopt a café” to help a business owner on the Coast. ● The season hasn’t been good but they put it in perspective that they are not as bad off as the South Coast.
Take Away Food Shop	2548	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Years Eve to end Jan down by 80%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have laid off staff. Owners working for free. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Large amount of stock wastage. At least 25kg of seafood.
Accommodation. Motel	2546	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First two weeks of January down 90%. Fortunately getting bookings from Defence / Insurance Assessors etc. Very few tourist bookings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cut all hours by at least half of 4 casual staff. Could cut further but wants to keep staff employed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Still active fire in the area. This needs to be managed realistically for tourists. Doesn’t want to promote yet as not necessarily safe to visit. Believes some businesses are not being honest with tourists. Some areas are not ready for business. ● Ongoing power cuts
Restaurant	2546			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Had extended themselves in December to prepare for a big season. Evacuated on the 31st. No power. Lost over \$50,000 in stock as couldn’t protect it.
Toast Cafe	2549		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have laid off staff and owners are working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bought the business in September. Invested heavily in summer stock that now cant move. ● Would expect to go through 10 – 16kg of coffee beans a day, doing 2 -3 kg.

Seafood Shop	2548	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revenue down \$150,000 for January. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Year traditionally one of the busiest times of year. Prepared to be busy but this resulted in over \$18,000 of stock loss on evacuation order day.
Tourist Attraction	2550	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business will close 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business will close 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have decided to close the business. Not a result of finances but due to the emotional stress of leaving the animals during evacuations and not being able to guarantee the protection and safety of the animals in their care.
General Comments - Cobargo	2550	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 60% of retail sector lost. Most have plans to rebuild but may be up to 2 years. ● Cobargo Folk Festival cancelled. Will do a small event for one day instead. 		
General Comments – Mogo	2536	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mogo Gold Rush Colony destroyed by fire and many businesses on the Western side of Mogo also destroyed by fire (The Original Gold Rush Colony, Mogo Aboriginal Lands Council building, Milstons Past & Present, Roman Leather, Merchant of Mogo, Posh Cat, Boho Chic, Allison Thompson Accounting, The Little Tea Shop, ABC Property, Mogo Mutts, Le Shabbie, Mary’s Gallery, Mogo Pottery, John Sharman Studio) ● Mogo Zoo renaming to Mogo Wildlife Park remains largely undamaged by the fires and animals saved. Plans to reopen in February (unknown date) once visual fire impacts have been repaired and perimeter fencing replaced. ● Over 30 business remaining and currently trading. Devastation to mainly one side of Mogo main road 		
Tourist Attraction	2536	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business fire impacted. No revenue 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The property has almost completely burnt down and lost the arena, fencing, sheds and paddocks, and all riding equipment. Currently re-homing most of the horses
Accommodation. Cabins	2537	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business fire impacted. No revenue 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All cabins structurally sound but damage to decks and services infrastructure. Lost the house and reception office and all outbuildings, fences & services Surrounded by lost wildlife and it is totally barren in vegetation.
Tourist activity	2551		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family run so no staff impacted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lost all sheds, garage and contents in the fire but started tours again Friday 24th January (cruise) ● Still no internet so cannot market ● In terms of bookings, “Cruise will get us through 2020” ● Struggling for motivation to host tourists
Accommodation. Cabins	2546	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No customers all of January and this will continue until fires are out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family run so no staff impacted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In tourist leave zone. ● Still (late January) active fire in the area and has decided not to take any bookings until this is no longer a threat. ● Council closed town on severe fire days in late January.

Farmers Market	2622	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Enormous” loss of trade for all local producers. ● Cancelled several times over holiday period due to threat of fire and producers defending their properties 		
Tourist Attraction	2622	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Closed the market garden (combination of high temps, drought, water restrictions and fire) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family run so no staff impacted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have not planted a summer crop, have planted a crop in the hope of having something to sell Autumn and showcase until then. ● The level 4 restrictions will destroy the business entirely especially as need to be growing something in order to teach and run workshops on growing. ● No garden means no leverage into the educational and tourism side of the business
Agritourism	2622	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hard to put a figure on this. Have lost everything on the farm. Had invested \$35k over the past three years and the orchard was not expected to begin delivering a return until 2022. Fire destroyed the entire orchard. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Our business no longer exists”
Tourist Activity	2622	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our cellar door takings average out at around \$3000 per month. With the bush-fire and associated road closures we have taken \$1329 since the beginning to now (Jan) ● We have missed two markets so far due to the fires. I estimate around \$1800 to \$2000 in lost takings. ● We have had no bookings for coach trips and other group visits since the fires 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wholesale to local businesses has only dipped slightly. Wholesale to other areas has dried up completely. I have an order sitting in the factory worth about \$2500 for a business in the Milton area. Both their business and ours have suffered from the fires and road closures have made it impossible to deliver/pick up the order. I do not know if they will be in a position to pay for the order by the time it can be collected? ● Our and our growing partners apple crops have been devastated. I will be lucky to get enough apples to press 300 litres. The pressing season usually starts at the beginning of

		started. Usually worth around \$2000 a month.		<p>February. The fires pushed the birds from the forest earlier than usual. They started to attack the fruit in early December, as opposed to the norm of mid January. Both us and our growers were not able to net the trees in time due to road closures and bad air quality for working in the field. I was also reluctant to net trees near buildings due to increasing fire fuel with the nylon nets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When the fire was blazing to the east of the factory we were showered in embers as a result we are covered in ash both inside and out. The clean up will require a considerable effort. The whole place smells of smoke. ● The stock in the bottle is unaffected, but I am not sure about the bulk in oak casks and plastic drums. Both materials breathe which means the cider could be tainted. I will not know until I bottle which I am reluctant to do until after the clean up. The worst case scenario is the bulk of my stock cider is tainted, no apples to press this year. This would leave us with little or no income from cider until October 2022, if we have a good season next year!
Retail Shop	2621	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our conversion rate is on average (and has been since 2008) 1:10. During December and January our peak buying times it can be 1:8. With an average sale during these months of \$181 (Dec) & \$158 (Jan) and without divulging too much you can see how much we are down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We employ 9 staff in total 5 permanent staff and 4 casuals. 7 are local people and 2 are from Queanbeyan. Currently we are keeping their shifts as normal. The gallery has been cleaned 'top to toe' several times to keep staff busy. We have a number of staff working on projects to keep them busy and motivated. This includes, regular newsletters, updating our 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least two of our suppliers have lost their homes and businesses. A supplier in Mogo that has been with the gallery since 2005, lost his home and gallery. Another supplier from Cobargo who has been with the gallery since 2012 has lost his home, workshop and all of his machinery. ● 3 other suppliers who live in the Malua Bay, Batehaven, Tomakin area had fires only streets away from their homes and were evacuated. Each of these suppliers are people in the 70's and 80's who have been with the gallery since the early 2000's and we really feel for them, it has been an extremely stressful time for them all.

			website, positive FB & Instagram posts and more importantly letting everyone know that we are open for business.	
Kings Highway	General Comments on Kings Highway closure to regional towns along the route.	<p>Week Beginning 16/12/2019 2018=1660 people 2019=1061 people</p> <p>Week Beginning 23/12/2019 2018=2321 people 2019=1428 people</p> <p>Week Beginning 30/12/2019 2019=2477 people 2020=943 people</p>		<p>drop of 599 people or 56.45%</p> <p>drop of 893 people or 62.53%</p> <p>drop of 1534 people or 162.67%</p>