



Proserpine Visitor Services Business Survey

Business Impact & Tourism Opportunities Report

Prepared by: Whitsundays Chamber of Commerce & Industry

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1.0 Executive Summary

The Whitsundays Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the peak regional body and united voice of local business and industry, committed to driving sustainable business growth and connectivity for our members.

The Chamber's Proserpine Sub-Committee initiated this survey to understand the business impacts of the Proserpine RV Park closure (2023), the Whitsunday Gold Visitor Information Centre closure (2025), and explore opportunities to boost visitation and economic activity in Proserpine.

The survey received 20 business responses from across key sectors including retail, hospitality, tourism, trades and services – plus supportive social media comments.

Results show strong support for traveller-friendly stopover facilities, central visitor servicing, and targeted activations that increase reasons to stop, stay and spend in town.

2.0 Key Findings

2.1 Impact of RV Park Closure

The Whitsunday Regional Council made the decision to close the free Proserpine RV Park in September 2023.

A decline in customer traffic or sales following the closure was reported by 68% of businesses surveyed. Among these, 42% described the drop as significant, linking it directly to reduced overnight stopovers.

Businesses highlighted that transient travellers — particularly *grey nomads* — contributed strongly to daily trade. Many respondents echoed similar concerns:

“We’ve noticed fewer caravanners stopping to restock supplies since the RV Park closed.”

“There was a huge drop in foot traffic... it was like the life was sucked out of the town.”

2.2 Customer Sentiment

Feedback from 79% of businesses said customers mentioned the closure, expressing disappointment about the RV Park closure.

Visitors frequently commented on a lack of free overnight facilities in Proserpine compared to other regional towns. Businesses believe this negatively affects Proserpine’s image as a traveller-friendly destination.

“Travellers asked why Proserpine removed the free stop when other towns are expanding them.”

2.3 Impact When the RV Park Opened (19 November 2019)

55% noticed a positive lift when the RV Park opened; 25% opened after that date. A number of businesses provided tangible data points as below:

“We’ve had approximately a 10% increase in sales.”

“We saw an increase in both sales and transaction counts.”

2.4 Support for Reinstating a Free RV Park

Survey results show that 85% of businesses believe a free RV Park, or a similar facility, would directly benefit their business and the broader economy.

Key reasons cited:

- Increased visitor stopovers leading to higher retail and hospitality spend.
- Greater exposure for local businesses.
- Improved perception of Proserpine as a welcoming regional hub.

2.5 Importance of a Visitor Information Centre

Survey results show that 70% of businesses believe having a centrally located Visitor Information Centre would encourage more tourists to stop and explore Proserpine (20% unsure, 10% no).

Businesses strongly supported relocating a centre within the main street or integrated alongside an RV Park, creating a “one-stop visitor hub.” Many respondents shared similar views.

“People need a reason to stop, not just pass through. A central info point would help showcase what Proserpine has to offer.”

3.0 Business-Driven Tourism Opportunities

Respondents provided valuable suggestions to attract more visitors and stimulate local business activity.

The following themes emerged:

3.1 Infrastructure & Facilities

- Reinstating a free or low-cost RV Park.
- Establishing a main-street Visitor Information Centre – or distributed information outlets in current Proserpine businesses.
- Expanding public amenities, including toilets, showers, shade, and parking.

3.2 Events & Experiences

- Creating an annual events calendar to attract repeat visitation.
- Leveraging existing major events — e.g. Paul Bowman Challenge — to better activate the main street.
- Developing guided town tours and “hidden gem” experiences.

3.3 Promoting Proserpine’s Heritage

- High enthusiasm for a Proserpine Historical Town Trail.
- Suggestions to involve local schools in storytelling.
- Encouraging partnerships with the Proserpine Museum.

4.0 Next Steps

Based on these findings, the Whitsundays Chamber Proserpine Sub-Committee will:

1. **Engage with Whitsunday Regional Council** to present the survey results and advocate for reinstating traveller-friendly facilities, including an RV Park and Visitor Information Centre.
2. Explore opportunities and partnerships to fund a **Whitsundays Chamber-led Historical Town Trail** initiative that integrates business, industry, and arts and culture precincts.
3. Launch a **Whitsundays Chamber-led Business Activation Strategy** to align Proserpine with regional tourism priorities and major events, and elevate appeal through improved retail standards, coordinated marketing, and precinct revitalisation initiatives.

5.0 Conclusion

The survey provides a strong perspective that:

- Proserpine needs traveller-friendly infrastructure to attract stopovers.
- A Visitor Information Centre, or equivalent, is critical to increasing town visitation.
- Local businesses are eager to collaborate on events and initiatives to grow tourism and economic opportunities.

The Whitsundays Chamber Proserpine Sub-Committee will use these insights to drive evidence-based advocacy and ensure Proserpine’s voice is represented in regional tourism planning.

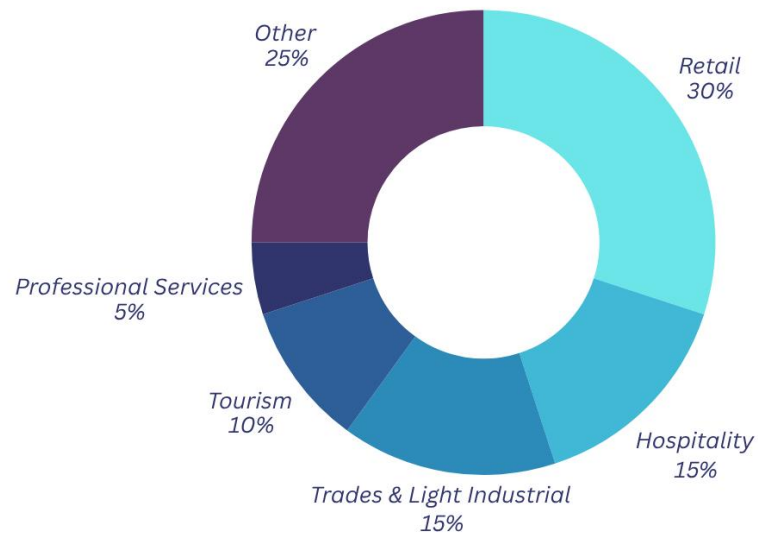
Attachment 1. Survey Data Summary

A full breakdown of each survey question, aggregated participant responses, and key insights is provided below for transparency.

Industry Type of Respondents

Retail 30% | Hospitality 15% | Professional Services 5%

Trades & Light Industrial 15% | Tourism 10% | Other 25%



When the RV Park opened (19 November 2019), did you notice an increase?

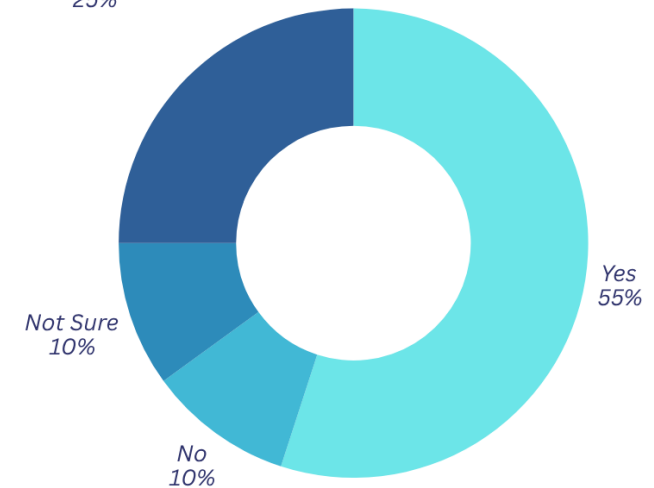
Yes 55% | No 10% | Not sure 10% | N/A (opened after) 25%

"We've had approximately a 10% increase of sales."

"Increase in both sales and transaction counts."

"The town had a more vibrant atmosphere."

Not Applicable (opened after 2019)
25%



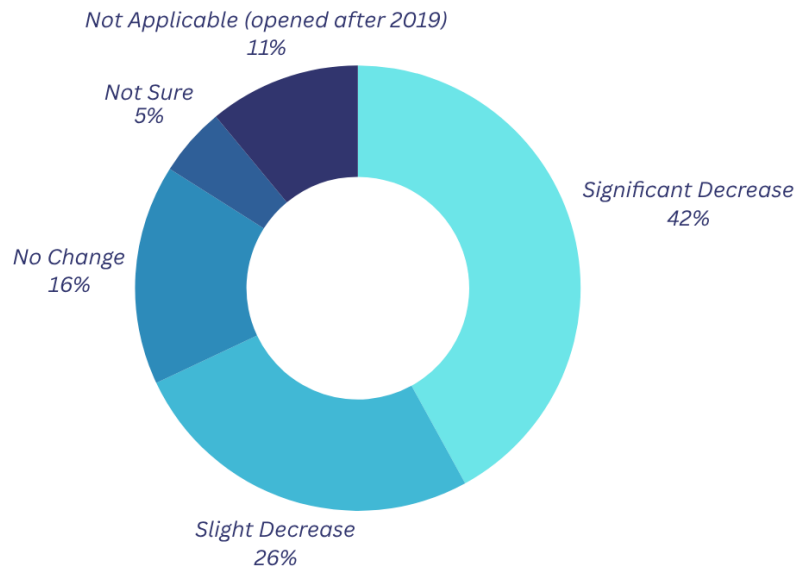
Did the RV Park closure (3 October 2023) affect your customer traffic/sales?

Significant decrease 42% | Slight decrease 26% | No change 16%

Not sure 5% | N/A (opened after) 11%

“There was a huge drop in foot traffic.”

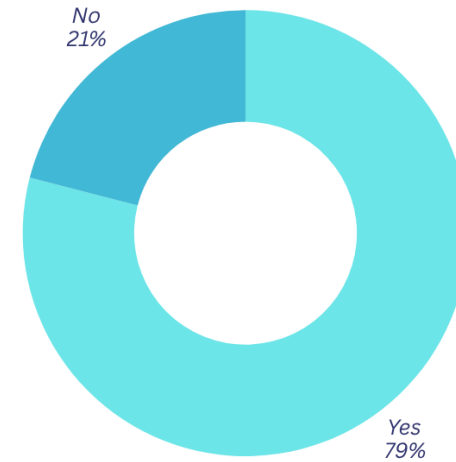
“Fewer caravanners stopping to restock supplies.”



Did customers mention the RV Park closure?

Yes 79% | No 21%

“Travellers asked why Proserpine removed the free stop when other towns are expanding them.”

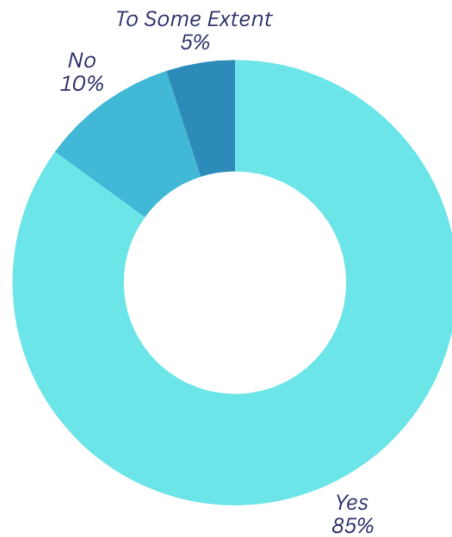


Would reinstating a free (or similar) RV facility benefit your business or the economy?

Definitely 85% | To some extent 5% | No 10% | Not sure 0%

"It brings people into town for groceries, parts and meals."

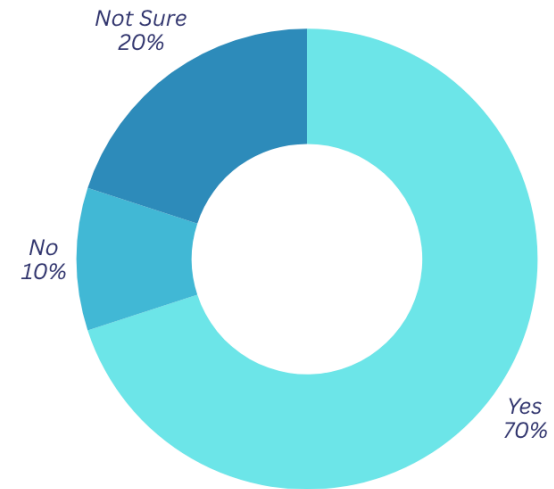
"More stopovers = more spend."



If a Visitor Information Centre were in the heart of town (or integrated with an RV stop), would it attract more tourists to stop?

Yes 70% | No 10% | Not sure 20%

"A central info point would help showcase what Proserpine has to offer."



Initiatives Suggested to Attract More Tourists

Key themes from open feedback:

- Free or low-cost RV parking
- Greater promotion of existing attractions: Proserpine Museum, Sugar Mill tours, crocodile safaris, Lake Proserpine
- New attractions: observation tower, Ferris wheel, distillery/microbrewery, heritage trail, family-friendly parks
- Events and activation: festivals, markets, live entertainment, light installations
- Better signage and marketing to showcase Proserpine's highlights
- Affordable accommodation options to retain visitors

Opportunities to Increase Visitor Stops:

- Enhanced marketing campaigns and digital promotion of Proserpine.
- More accessible parking and facilities for caravans and larger vehicles.
- Support for unique small-town attractions like quirky collections, heritage stories, and op-shop trails.
- Partnerships with local businesses to create bundled experiences

Other Suggestions from Businesses:

- Develop a Heritage Town Trail in partnership with schools, museum, and local storytellers.
- Promote seasonal “drawcard” events to encourage repeat visitation.
- Explore light-based installations and “after dark” activations to encourage overnight stays.
- Create voucher booklets and incentives to channel visitors into local shops and eateries.