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Why you should shop local this Christmas

With our most awaited shopping season in full swing, the regions peak business group, **Business Hunter**, is encouraging Hunter residents to consider buying local.

Business Hunter CEO, Bob Hawes offered that by buying local, consumers helped stimulate their regional economy, retain valuable jobs, support neighbours and strengthen local community and culture.

“Buying locally is an investment in your own community, both socially and economically. Our local shops create and sustain local jobs, so visiting main street shops or local shopping centres this Christmas will support economic and social opportunities on our own doorstep,” said Mr Hawes.

“In today’s globalised market it’s convenient to purchase goods online from large international platforms. If your preference is to shop online it’s worth remembering that most local bricks and mortar stores, as a result of covid, now have online trading platforms. Your purchase will mean much more to a smaller local business and support for the local economy rather than relying on a large international presence.”

Mercifully for retailers still recovering from pandemic losses, national retail figures have held up during the second half of this year, and a healthy Christmas trading period will provide a buffer against traditionally weaker trading throughout January.

“For many businesses, Christmas trade is a substantial portion of their annual takings and primes them for being able to sustain themselves for the quieter times that follow. Covid wreaked havoc on this in 2020 and 2021,” said Mr Hawes.

Mr Hawes said findings from the recently published [Business Conditions Survey](#)* revealed plummeting confidence among Hunter businesses with regard to their 2023 economic outlook, with concern spiking over **inflation and energy prices**.

“One in four Hunter businesses expressed the highest level of concern, a score of ten out of ten, for the impact of rising interest rates on profit margins and the ability to retain current staff,” said Mr Hawes.

On energy bills, 25% of Hunter respondents indicated a maximum level of concern for impacts on profit margins and their expenditure and expansion plans.

“It’s now common to hear from members that their energy bills have doubled. For context, this increase could realistically represent one worker’s annual wages for a small business, and you can extrapolate out from there,” said Mr Hawes.

“There’s likely more pain to come on the interest rate and energy cost fronts, and a healthy Christmas trade will be key to ensuring local businesses can better weather whatever storm arrives next. With that in mind, it will be great to see people visiting our local stores, eating out and visiting our local attractions throughout the Christmas period to support their community,” said Mr Hawes.

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*The [Business Conditions Survey](#) is undertaken by Business NSW, in partnership with Business Hunter. Figures shown are Hunter specific and are not contained in the overall report.