



REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Business Retention and Expansion Survey



The NSW Government partners local councils and local business organisations to help regional communities meet the challenges presented by economic forces and population shifts.

A first step in addressing these challenges is gaining local knowledge. Through the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Survey, the Department of State and Regional Development provides communities with a means of gaining insight into local business communities' needs, strengths, weaknesses and potential for growth.

The BRE Survey is a tool used in NSW and around the world to assist local businesses to survive and grow in the modern economy. Surveys can be targeted at a town, an industry or a Local Government Area. Communities can use the survey to collect and collate necessary business information to underpin strategies to improve the local economic environment. It is an effective mechanism for addressing important challenges confronting local communities including:

- overcoming problems and exploring opportunities sooner rather than later
- encouraging both whole communities and individual businesses to be more responsive to change
- making the local business environment more productive and attractive.

The survey can be used at any time in the economic cycle. While some communities have used the survey as part of a response to economic downturns or shocks, it is also relevant when the economy is healthy and/or growing as a means of 'taking the pulse' of local businesses and identifying what support can be provided to ensure that businesses can fully capitalise on opportunities.

The BRE Survey:

- improves understanding of the needs and perspectives of local businesses
- connects businesses to resources and assistance programs
- identifies and addresses immediate concerns of individual businesses
- develops strategies and actions that will support economic development and growth in local employment
- increases the competitiveness of local businesses
- provides community support for local business and improves profitability
- increases community enthusiasm and capacity to become involved in other initiatives.

To undertake a BRE Survey

We have prepared a [BRE Survey Resource Kit](#) to assist in determining if your community is ready for a BRE Survey and as a step-by-step guide if your community has decided to undertake the survey. It also includes checklists, tips and resource materials such as a sample press release and letter to businesses.

Funding to conduct a BRE Survey for regional communities may be available to local councils or business organisations under the [Community Economic Development Program](#).

Organisations offered funding under the Department's Community Economic Development Program to conduct a BRE Survey use a web-based facility for data entry and analysis of survey responses. This facility is only available to organisations funded by DSRD to conduct a BRE Survey. Such organisations will first need to contact their [DSRD Community Economic Development Manager](#) to obtain a username and password. Funded organisations wishing to include additional survey questions should also use this facility.

[Download the BRE Survey Resource Kit.](#)

To complete a survey online

Businesses in locations where BRE Surveys are currently underway can [complete a survey online here](#). Please have your assigned survey reference number handy.

[Fill in your online survey now.](#)

Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Survey Statewide Report

The Department of State and Regional Development commissioned Dr W. Roger Epps, Honorary Fellow, University of New England, Armidale in 2004 to analyse the responses provided to the Business Retention and Expansion Survey on a Statewide basis. This analysis covers responses from over 6,000 regional businesses in 63 towns within 45 local government areas. These numbers are significant (when combined on a Statewide basis) and provide indicative benchmarks for responses to each survey question.

The circumstances of individual communities should also be taken into account when using the study results as benchmarks. Indicative benchmarks for responses to each survey question




are now available.

[Download the BRE Statewide Report.](#)

For more information

Enterprise and Regional Development Division | ☎ +61 2 9338 6719 |
DSRDced@business.nsw.gov.au

Related publications

-  [Business Retention and Expansion survey questionnaire 2007](#)
-  [Business Retention and Expansion survey Statewide Report](#)
-  [Business Retention and Expansion Survey information kit](#)