

Friday, 24 January 2020

Today 26% of Australian businesses have been affected by bushfires - Australia needs to support businesses in the Accommodation and Food services industries with Visitors and Tourists

In total over a quarter (26%) of Australian businesses have been affected either 'A great deal' (7%), 'Somewhat' (10%) or 'A little' (9%) by the bushfires. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of businesses have been unaffected by the bushfires according to a special Roy Morgan Snap SMS Survey of 1,308 Australian businesses this week.

A deeper analysis of the industries most heavily impacted shows that over a third of businesses in the Accommodation and Food services sector, which includes travel and tourism, say they have been affected 'A great deal' – higher than any other industry.

Businesses in Queensland and NSW have been the hardest hit with 12% of Queensland businesses and 11% of NSW businesses affected 'A great deal' by the bushfires – far higher than any other States.

In general businesses in NSW are the most likely to have been impacted with over a third (35%) affected in some way compared to around a quarter of businesses in Queensland (25%) and Victoria (24%). In contrast, only 16% of businesses in WA and 11% in Tasmania have been affected at all.

Business people around Australia were asked: "Has your business been affected by the bushfires in any way? Either 'A great deal', 'Somewhat', 'A little' or 'Not at all'. Those business people that answered in the affirmative were then asked: "In what way has your business been affected by the bushfires?"

For the 7% that say the business has been affected 'A great deal' by the bushfires common impacts cited include 'Cancelled bookings and events', 'Lack of access to the business or properties because of the fires', 'Staff not available for work because of diversion to fighting fires', 'Air quality' and 'Smoke haze', 'Lack of tourists' and some have been 'Burned out entirely'.

The 10% who say their business has been 'Somewhat' affected by the bushfires mention 'Loss of income', 'Employees sick from smoke', 'Employees called away for reserve duty/fighting fires', 'Employees unable to get to work', 'Customers depressed and sad' and 'Cancellation of jobs'.

The remaining 9% who say their business has been affected 'A little' by the bushfires mainly refer to the 'Smoke contamination', and 'Air quality', 'Staff taking time off to volunteer', and a drop off in customers as there are 'Less tourists', 'Less orders', and 'Less money available for people to spend.'

Roy Morgan Chief Executive Officer Michele Levine pointed out that although the bushfires have generated a high level of media interest Australia is 'Open for business':

"For those businesses that have been affected to some degree, most have been affected only a little or somewhat. Only 7% of businesses have been affected a great deal by the bushfires. Unfortunately for those businesses in the areas that have been hit directly by the bushfires, this could mean the business has been completely wiped out or severely impacted by the lack of tourists and staff available for work as many have been off fighting the fires in these areas.

"Unsurprisingly the biggest impact has been in NSW which has borne the brunt of the catastrophe. Over a third of businesses in NSW have been affected by the bushfires – far higher than any other state. However, this still means nearly two-thirds of businesses in NSW haven't been affected at all.

"An important factor to appreciate when analysing the impact of the bushfires is to differentiate between short-term impacts created by staff missing work to fight the fires and potential longer-term impacts such as a sustained drop in tourism to directly affected areas and even Australia as a whole.

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“It is vitally important that the Federal and State Governments step up and continue to inject funding into bushfire affected communities and that the Australian community at large responds to the devastation by returning to holiday spots that have lost a huge amount of business over the Summer.

“Well-known Australian identities, including community leaders and prominent artists, have their part to play in getting the word out that Australia is ‘Open for Business’. [Tourism is Australia’s fifth largest export earner valued at over \\$20 billion annually](#) and it’s imperative that locals, as well as potential tourists from overseas, are made aware that there are many Australians eager to welcome tourists from far and wide to Australian shores – and there’s plenty to do and see!”

Businesses affected by the bushfires around Australia by State



Source: Roy Morgan Special Snap SMS Poll of Australian businesses in January 2020, n=1,308.
Base: Australian businesses.

		Jan 21-22, 2020					
		States					
Australian Businesses		NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA#	TAS#
%		%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal	7	11	3	12	1	1	0
Somewhat	10	14	11	5	5	12	0
A Little	9	10	10	8	15	3	11
TOTAL EFFECTED	26	35	24	25	21	16	11
NOT AT ALL EFFECTED	74	65	76	75	79	84	89
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes with fewer than 50 respondents should be treated with caution.

About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is Australia's largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 75 years' experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

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Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
1,000	±3.0	±2.7	±1.9	±1.3