

Port Macquarie to Coffs Harbour overview

Case study - Kempsey

Kempsey's town centre has been revitalised, transforming it from a transit town to a regional centre where local communities want to do business and come together. Kempsey Shire Council planned and led the changes to the main street through Kempsey following the opening of the Kempsey bypass in 2013.

A post-bypass study commissioned by Kempsey Shire Council and conducted by Dr Bruno Parolin found that at the time of the bypass opening to traffic in 2013, there was widespread concern by businesses in the town that they would suffer significant downturn. While there was an immediate decline in trade experienced by most businesses on opening of the bypass, this was short-lived. The study found:

- An increased turnover from \$109.5 million in 2013 to \$159.2 million in 2017 – a 45.2 per cent increase.
- Between the period 2013 and 2017, across all businesses, there has been an increase of 249 jobs – from 1137 jobs in 2013 to 1386 jobs in 2017 – an increase of 21.8 per cent over 2013 levels.



Before Kempsey bypass

- Businesses reported there was an increase in local residents and those from coastal and hinterland towns utilising Kempsey as it was easier to access and a more desirable place to shop now that the congested highway traffic was no longer there.
- Twenty four businesses closed between 2013 and 2017, however, in the same period, 21 new businesses started operations in Kempsey with 11 of these being in the catering sector. These new businesses alone generated 250 new jobs, 170 of which are located at the highway service centre.¹

The study found that Kempsey Shire Council's early planning for completion of the bypass, including the investment in beautification of the streetscape infrastructure, along with local business willingness to diversify and embrace new markets, has significantly contributed to the increase in visitors, trade and tourism in the town.



After Kempsey bypass

1. Kempsey Post Bypass Impacts Monitoring Study (August 2017) <http://www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au/council/meetings/2017/2017-09-19/pubs/2017-09-19-appendix-k-kempsey-post-bypass-impacts-monitoring-study-august-2017.pdf>